

# DISCOVERING OPPORTUNITIES FOR DESIGN-DRIVEN REAL ESTATE DEVELOPMENT

Comparing perceptions of design project progress  
from two viewpoints in the case of Torikorttelit

Jutta Menestrina  
Master's Thesis for Master of Arts  
30 ECTS  
Creative Sustainability  
Aalto university, School of Art Design & Architecture  
Autumn 2017

**Author** Jutta Menestrina

**Title of thesis** Design-driven real estate development. Perceptions on design project progress from two viewpoints. Case Torikorttelit

**Department** Design

**Degree programme** Master’s Programme in Creative Sustainability

**Year** 2017

**Number of pages** 77+6

**Language** English

**Abstract**

In my master’s thesis, I study the role of design in real estate development through a case-study example of Torikorttelit, Tori Quarters in Helsinki. The area consisting of three blocks of buildings is located in the historical center of the city in between the Senate Square and the Market Square. During the past ten years, the area has been going through an extensive revitalisation initiative. Helsingin Leijona Oy, a daughter company of the City of Helsinki manages the premises and curates the project.

Traditionally, design is not seen as a strategic part of real estate development. Design or designers may be employed by developers, but generally the projects stay separate from the profession itself. Helsingin Leijona Oy recognised the opportunity to explore a “design-driven” approach to their work as they see it as an opportunity to innovate within their field. They commissioned this master’s thesis to research the opportunities to increase design influence in their work.

Helsingin Leijona Oy has procured design services for several projects in Torikorttelit over the past years. These projects are the basis of their current design competency and design understanding. In this thesis I study the previous experiences of the procurer and the designers in order to find out how design use could be most efficiently increased.

For the research, I interviewed designers who participated in four different projects in Torikorttelit. The interviews concentrated on the respective projects as well as the designers’ views on the role of design in real estate development. After these interviews, I facilitated a workshop to inquire the procurers’ perception on the corresponding topics. The research was conducted with a mixed method approach, also including other methods such as mappings and observations.

The conclusions of my thesis are based on comparing the perceptions of the designers and the procurer. I detected several conflicting views of the two parties, which revealed phases of work where design outcomes were affected. The comparison also pointed out instances, where the two parties agreed on unsuccessful work models. In my thesis I present areas, where the potential of design has not been reached and where improvements could be made. Through detecting these areas, I aim to elucidate the potential of design in real estate development.

I detected a connection between how the projects were initiated and how successful the outcomes of the projects were. In the projects where collaboration was reached at an early stage, design proposals had the most impact. In the conclusions, I separate and define the two ways real estate developers may adapt design into their work. One way is through increasing design competency within an organisation and the second way is to increase an organisation’s design knowledge in order to improve their expertise in procuring design.

**Keywords** Perceptions of design, design definitions, procuring design, design in real estate development, design in the public sector

<b>Tekijä</b> Jutta Menestrina		
<b>Työn nimi</b> Design-driven real estate development. Perceptions on design project progress from two viewpoints. Case Torikorttelit		
<b>Laitos</b> Muotoilun laitos		
<b>Koulutusohjelma</b> Master's Programme in Creative Sustainability		
<b>Vuosi</b> 2017	<b>Sivumäärä</b> 77+6	<b>Kieli</b> Englanti
<b>Tiivistelmä</b>		
<p>Opinnäytetyössäni tutkin muotoilun roolia kiinteistökehittämisessä Torikorttelit case-tutkimuksen kautta. Torikorttelit sijaitsevat Helsingin historiallisen keskustan sydämessä Senaatintorin ja Kauppatorin välissä. Aluetta on elävöitetty vuodesta 2009 lähtien ja projektin ensimmäinen vaihe tulee päätökseen vuonna 2017. Helsingin kaupungin tytäryhtiö Helsingin Leijona Oy hallinnoi kiinteistöjä sekä on vastuussa alueen elävöittämisestä.</p> <p>Kiinteistökehittäminen tarkoittaa toimintaa, joka pyrkii nostamaan rakennetun ympäristön arvoa projektitoiminnan avulla. Muotoilua käytetään toisinaan kehitysprojekteissa hankintojen kautta, mutta muotoilujohtoista kiinteistökehittämistä ei perinteisesti toteuteta. Helsingin Leijona Oy tunnisti työssään mahdollisuuden lisätä muotoilun vaikutusta kiinteistökehittämisessä innovatiivisen työtavan saavuttamiseksi. Tarkastellakseen mahdollisuuksia toteuttaa muotoilujohtoista kiinteistökehittämistä yhtiö tilasi aiheesta muotoilun alan tutkielman.</p> <p>Yhtiö on hankkinut muotoilun palveluita erilaisiin elävöittämistyöhön kuuluviin projekteihin vuosien varrella. Nämä projektit ovat luoneet perustan Helsingin Leijona Oy:n nykyiselle muotoiluymmärtämisen tasolle. Lopputyössäni tutkin näitä jo toteutettuja projekteja havainnollistaakseni miten ja millä osa-alueilla muotoilun käyttöä olisi tehokkainta lisätä.</p> <p>Tutkimusta varten haastattelin muotoilijoita, jotka ovat osallistuneet neljään eri projektiin, jotka liittyvät Torikorttelisiin. Haastatteluissa kysyttiin projektien etenemisestä ja osallistujien näkemyksistä muotoilun roolista kiinteistökehittämisessä nyt ja tulevaisuudessa. Tämän jälkeen haastattelin Helsingin Leijona Oy:tä samoista teemoista. Tutkimusta varten sovelsin ja yhdistelin myös muita tutkimusmetodeja, kuten workshop-toimintaa ja havainnointimetodeja.</p> <p>Lopputyöni tutkimuksen tulokset perustuvat muotoilijoiden ja hankkijan näkökulmien vertailuun. Kun näkökulmat asetetaan vastakkain, on mahdollista tunnistaa eroavaisuuksia toimintamallien hahmottamisessa. Nämä eroavaisuudet vaikuttavat muotoilun tuloksien menestyksyyteen. Osaltaan tutkimus myös paljastaa näkemykset, joissa muotoilijat ja hankkijat yksimielisesti hahmottavat toimintamallien puutteet. Näkemysten vertailun kautta esittelen lopputyössä kehitysalueita, joissa muotoilun käytön potentiaalia ei ole vielä kokonaisuudessaan saavutettu. Näiden alueiden tunnistamisen kautta pyrin havainnollistamaan muotoilun roolin potentiaalia osana kiinteistökehittämistä.</p> <p>Erityisesti projektien aloituksissa tunnistin eroavaisuuksia toimintatavoissa, jotka vaikuttivat projektien lopputulokseen. Projekteissa, joissa yhteisymmärrys saavutettiin aikaisessa vaiheessa, saavutettiin myös muotoilun keinoja käyttäen suurin hyöty. Johtopäätöksissä eritellään kaksi tapaa, jotka kiinteistökehittäjien tulee huomioida muotoilun mukaan ottamisessa. Ensimmäinen tapa on lisätä muotoiluosaamista organisaation sisällä ja toinen tapa on muotoiluymmärryksen kasvattamisen kautta kehittyminen muotoilun hankkijana.</p>		
<b>Avainsanat</b> Näkemyksiä muotoilusta, muotoilun määrittäminen, muotoilun hankkiminen, muotoilu kiinteistökehittämisessä, muotoilu julkisella sektorilla		

# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

---

I would like to emphasise that this thesis was a commissioned design research paper. I am thankful to the commissioning company for their support and collaboration throughout the process. I would also like to mention that along with this thesis, the company also commissioned two other theses from the Real Estate Department in Aalto University. I worked closely with the other two students in researching the case study. I found the multidisciplinary approach especially rewarding.

I would also like to thank my supervisor Ramia Mazé for her guidance and valuable support.

I am grateful to all the interviewees who took part in this research. I would like to include a comment from one of the interviews which summarises the entire process for me:

**“Design is like sport: the more you train the better you get.”**



# ABSTRACT

---

In my master's thesis, I study the role of design in real estate development through a case-study example of Torikorttelit, Tori Quarters in Helsinki. The area consisting of three blocks of buildings is located in the historical center of the city in between the Senate Square and the Market Square. During the past ten years, the area has been going through an extensive revitalisation initiative. Helsingin Leijona Oy, a daughter company of the City of Helsinki manages the premises and curates the project.

Traditionally, design is not seen as a strategic part of real estate development. Design or designers may be employed by developers, but generally the projects stay separate from the profession itself. Helsingin Leijona Oy recognised the opportunity to explore a "design-driven" approach to their work as they see it as an opportunity to innovate within their field. They commissioned this master's thesis to research the opportunities to increase design influence in their work.

Helsingin Leijona Oy has procured design services for several projects in Torikorttelit over the past years. These projects are the basis of their current design competency and design understanding. In this thesis I study the previous experiences of the procurer and the designers in order to find out how design use could be most efficiently increased.

For the research, I interviewed designers who participated in four different projects in Torikorttelit. The interviews concentrated on the respective projects as well as the designers' views on the role of design in real estate development. After these interviews, I facilitated a workshop to inquire the procurers' perception on the corresponding topics. The research was thus conducted with a mixed method approach, also including other methods such as mappings and observations.

The conclusions of my thesis are based on comparing the perceptions of the designers and the procurer. I detected several conflicting views of the two parties, which revealed phases of work where design outcomes were affected. The comparison also pointed out instances, where the two parties agreed on unsuccessful work models. In my thesis I present areas, where the potential of design has not been reached and where improvements could be made. Through detecting these areas, I aim to elucidate the potential of design in real estate development.

I detected a connection between how the projects were initiated and how successful the outcomes of the projects were. In the projects where collaboration was reached at an early stage, design proposals had the most impact. In the conclusions, I separate and define the two ways real estate developers may adapt design into their work. One way is through increasing design competency within an organisation and the second way is to increase an organisation's design knowledge in order to improve their expertise in procuring design.



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

---

1

## INTODUCTION

- 1.1 Torikorttelit - the New Old Town of Helsinki
- 1.2 The expanding role of design in real estate development
- 1.3 Future developments in Helsinki
- 1.4 “Making Torikorttelit a place (to be)”: design influence and revitalisation

2

## TORIKORTTELIT: A RESEARCH COMMISSION IN A REAL-WORLD CONTEXT

- 2.1 Project commission from Helsingin Leijona Oy
- 2.2 Experience driven revitalisation in Torikorttelit
- 2.3 Focusing the research

3

## RELEVANT LITERATURE ON DESIGN DEFINITIONS, PERCEPTIONS & ROLES

- 3.1 Looking from within and outside the field of design
- 3.2 Benefits of design
- 3.3 The complexity of defining design
- 3.4 Different types of design in design theory
- 3.5 Presenting design use through ladders
- 3.6 Design competency
- 3.7 Procuring design
- 3.8 Communication in design projects
- 3.9 An overview of design project roles and dynamics

4

## RESEARCH APPROACH: FORMING & COMPARING PERCEPTIONS

- Description of the research approach
- 4.1 Treating Torikorttelit as a case study
- 4.2 Multiple research methods
- 4.3 Interviews conducted
- 4.4 Analysis methods

5

## COLLECTING & ANALYSING EMPIRICAL RESEARCH MATERIAL

- 5.1 Getting to know the organisation
- 5.2 Interviews timeline
- 5.3 Perception comparison as a method
- 5.4 Coding and analysing the data table
- 5.5 Category analysis and sorting
- 5.6 Affinity diagram analysis
- 5.7 Synthesis

6

## FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS & OPPORTUNITIES

- Reflections on choosing the perception comparison method
- 6.1 Fostering creativity within a scope
- 6.2 Potential = systematic learning processes
- 6.3 Design competency and designer potential in real estate development

7

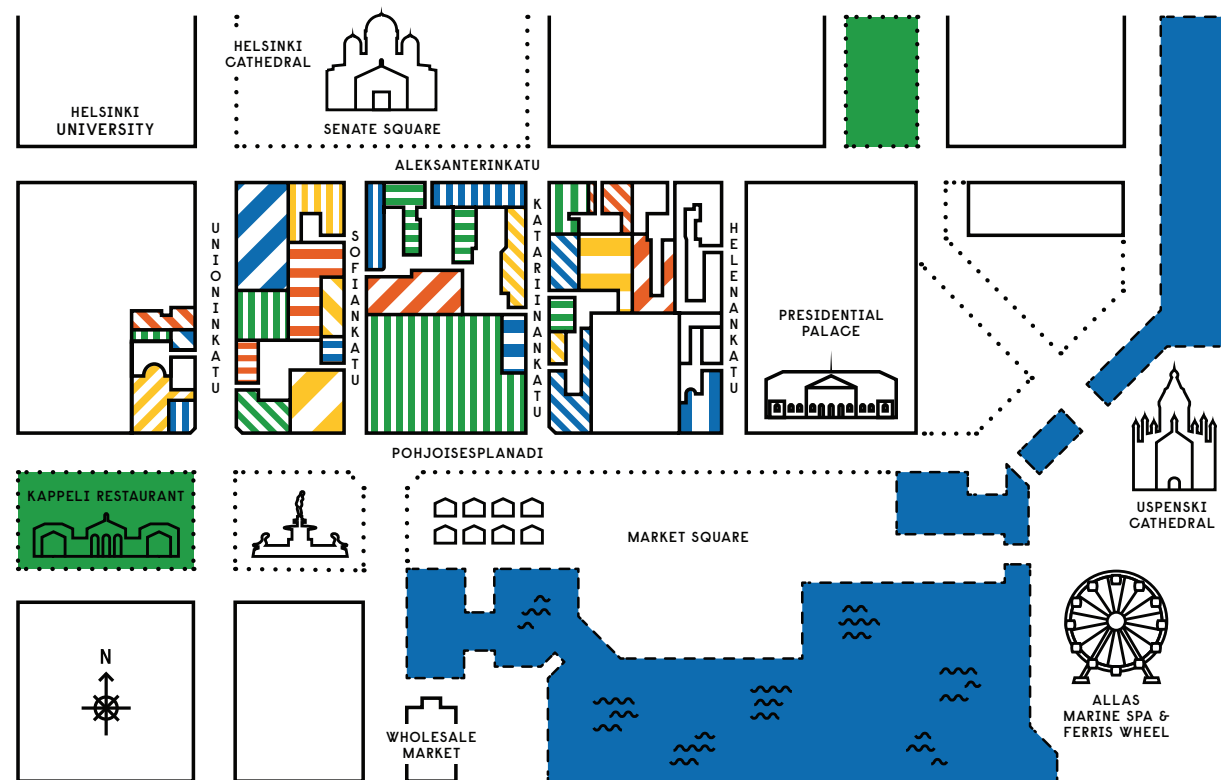
## DISCUSSION

8

## APPENDICES







Aerial view of Torikorttelit in front of the Helsinki Cathedral. Photo by Suomen Ilmakuva Oy





# INTRODUCTION

---



## TORIKORTTELIT – THE NEW OLD TOWN OF HELSINKI

“Torikorttelit is kind of a remarkable place. This wonderful area with very impressive architecture ...What if it would be something you don’t find in any other city?”  
Helsinki based designer, (2017)

Helsinki is a small but prominent Nordic capital. Tourists arrive by ferries directly into the city and mix in with the residents. The architecture is evidently influenced by both the eastern and western neighbours of Finland. The buildings most characteristic of Helsinki are the neoclassical buildings of the city centre, many of them are located along the Esplanade Park. Directly at the end of the park, three blocks of buildings, only a few stories high, in an array of pastel colours stand out as a peculiar complex of old beautiful little buildings.

The buildings, which are the oldest in the entire city, are reminiscent of a traditional old town of a European city, but in Helsinki, the area differs from its foreign big sisters. Most old towns are the remains of city life from the old days, but in Helsinki the area has only recently been recognised and branded as “the New Old Town”. For the past ten years, the buildings have been going through refurbishments and conversions to be restored to their original pastel splendour. Today tourists wander aimlessly through the blocks like in any attraction city while citizens find their way to specific shops, restaurants or museums within the cluster of buildings.

This building complex was named Torikorttelit, the Tori Quarters, around the year 2009. A literal translation of the name is “market quarters”. The complex is located between two historically significant squares: The Senate Square to the north and the Market Square to the south and this location gave the quarters its new name. When this historical area consisting of the two squares, Helsinki Cathedral, university buildings and administrative blocks were built, Torikorttelit was the principal trading area around which Helsinki expanded.





Photo by Jussi Hellsten

For the main part of the 20th century, the buildings were mostly inhabited by the offices of the City of Helsinki civil servants. The decision to revitalise came from the understanding that these buildings had heaps of potential to cater for citizens and visitors and serve for economic purposes rather than host offices behind closed doors. The development and conversion process has been complex and far from straightforward. As an example of real estate development within the municipal sector, it highlights many struggles, but also opportunities.

In this thesis, I will look into the revitalisation of these city-owned buildings where the public good is placed before making profit. In order to study Torikorttelit, I adapted a multiple and 'mixed' methods approach. I combined methods from qualitative and case study research with some designerly methods. The objective was to collect information from the many stakeholders involved in this public sector real estate development project. Conducting the research was a learning process and included different types of methods which I found most useful for each phase of the project. It was especially important to map the stakeholder network early on in the process.

The old city-owned buildings have obvious cultural and historical value as they are a part of the legacy of the city. The responsibility for how the buildings are used and managed and how their maintenance is handled comes in as a key factor with ownership. When the buildings are kept under public ownership, the risk of valuable buildings falling to unworthy use or even being demolished can be avoided. The use and handling of these types of buildings is heavily controlled by different public authorities. The many City offices involved with the projects dealing with public buildings (until the organisational reform in 2017) included heritage control, building control, city planning, real estate department and spatial services (Vuorio, 2017). Also, it should be noted that many old buildings require expensive and difficult maintenance processes.

Each case is different, but the aim is for the buildings to remain in use and to be kept in good condition. The complex network of stakeholders and controlling units make the projects difficult. The risk for the buildings to end unsuitable or undesirable for use is prominent in the complicated process. Real estate managers work to steer the projects through the bureaucracy and the network of stakeholders towards a desired state. As a comparison to Torikorttelit, I will present the peculiar revitalisation process of Lasipalatsi, another valuable city-owned building. This project exemplifies the complex system of real estate development in the public sector and presents the undefined role of a designer within the process.

## THE EXPANDING ROLE OF DESIGN IN REAL ESTATE DEVELOPMENT

Lasipalatsi was built in 1936 to showcase progress and modernism in Helsinki. The building was fully refurbished in the early 1990s as it had fallen into bad condition. Instead of solely pursuing a maintenance project, the architect in charge proposed a holistic concept for the building (Ilonen, 2004). Lasipalatsi was appointed a new purpose reminiscent of its former glory as a modern bazaar. The building was thus updated to resonate the technological developments of the 1990s as a nod to the time of the refurbishment, but also as a nod to the original aim of the building to showcase progress. The project was hugely successful and the concept development was acknowledged as the driving force.

In an interview, the architect Pia Ilonen described how she conceived the project as something more than just a conservation commission for the building. Ilonen understood the importance of considering appropriate use for the building, not solely preserving the building to heritage listed standards. Ilonen became the agent who facilitated the dialogue between all the



stakeholders including politicians and public media (Ilonen,2004). “In the end, we even took requests from companies interested in becoming tenants at the premises... We were acting like real estate developers, not just architects,” Ilonen continues to describe the project that pushed the limits of the role of an architect.

The interesting aspect of this example is that Ilonen directly states that the architect took the role of a real estate developer. When the renovation project turned into a complete reconsideration of the concept of Lasipalatsi, the cooperation between designers and real estate developers was not established. To preserve and curate the concept, the architect remained as the steering force. For designers, the collaboration protocols with real estate developers remain fuzzy. Undeniably, for a concept to fulfil its potential, there should be an understanding between the planners, developers, designers and the managers in how to utilise the spaces.

Hella Hernberg, another architect from Helsinki, similarly describes the confusion in defining the roles in managing or moderating building use. In her article Architect/Designer as Urban Agent: A case of mediating temporary uses in cities (2017) she established the term “urban agent” to describe the role left undefined in managing the built environment. Her research concludes that there is potential in architects or designers acting as “urban agents” who would moderate the temporary use of buildings. This play on words refers to real estate agents systematically finding users for premises while they remain on the market. Hernberg suggests that mediating temporary use could benefit from an appointed facilitator to avoid underutilisation of buildings.

In her research, Hernberg describes an opportunity that could be achieved by redefining the roles in real estate development: “the typical dynamics in the real estate or urban development process can be challenged and changed, and the groups of participants opened beyond those, which in traditional real-estate developments are sitting ‘behind closed doors’” (2017:7).

## FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS IN HELSINKI

Hernberg continues to argue that the entire process of developing cities is in turmoil: “Urban planning is struggling to cope with a range of new urban phenomena. Societal challenges and increasingly limited resources are impacting cities in various ways that call for more flexible planning and strategies for adaptable use of buildings and spaces.” (Mäntysalo et al 2015, Krueger & Gibbs 2007 cited in Hernberg 2017:1). The concept of urban planning Hernberg discusses in her work touches on more fields than just real estate development. It is important to keep in mind that urban development consists of a large network of stakeholders, real estate development being one.

Cooperation is a key aspect to reaching goals within the large network of actors in urban development, especially if the vision put forward is of an untraditional type. There is a risk that large-scale, straightforward and newly built projects, such as shopping malls in the outskirts of the city, are prioritised in urban development as the stakeholder network is more manageable and the projects more straightforward. Complex projects in existing buildings may easily be overseen due to the complicatedness of the project.

As Helsinki is expected to expand in an exponential manner in the decades to come (Helsingin kaupunkisuunnitteluvirasto, 2013), it is beneficial to recognise the successful ways of mediating the growing of a city. Fostering public spaces and places of culture is fundamental in preserving the city for the people to live in (Jacobs, 1993). Urban planning looks at the expansion in terms of inhabiting the growing population, not through curating changes in different areas. The public sector is liable to preserve and conserve cultural heritage and make the city as liveable as possible.

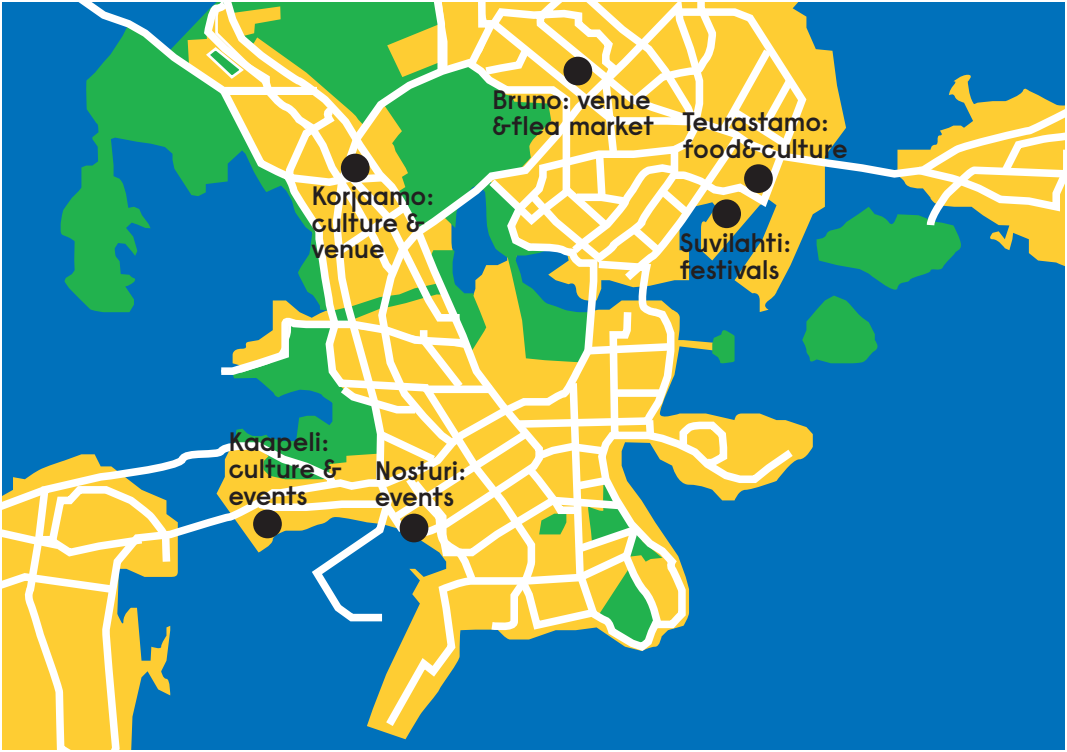
In the expanding city, it is also important to foster and curate the best practices according

to sustainable development. Foresightful maintaining of buildings has been proven to be more sustainable than rebuilding or newly-built development (Frey, Dunn and Cochran, 2011). The City as a facilitator of the built environment has room for improvement in the maintaining of the building stock under their ownership (Ilonen, 2017). For example, the rhythm of upkeep is currently carried through in a way where renovations are done in intervals decades instead of implementing foresightful small efforts. A more systematic upkeep could be a part of caring for our built environment.

Another aspect of caring is to preserve interesting mixed use buildings that can foster city culture (Jacobs, 1993). Even though Helsinki is a relatively small capital with less than 600,000 inhabitants (2016), it fortunately has several successful examples of culture driven building complexes (Map 2). Most of these examples are converted from industrial use. The fostering of cultural use has been put forward by either active citizens or by revitalisation initiatives.

These examples highlight the importance of concept creation and concept fostering for real estate development.

Even with these positive examples in mind, it is important to note that revitalisation is a contested term and area of work. The people involved in this research project acknowledged this issue and approached the study with a critical perspective. The possible negative side effects and consequences of revitalisation were discussed as we started the project. The topic was touched upon, but not extensively studied for the commissioned report. This is due to the isolated location and historical value of Torikorttelit. One aspect that revitalisation has affected in the area is that the rental prices rose in some of the premises. For example, an old department store facility in Torikorttelit was filled with craft vendors, but after the renovation the vendors could not afford to return. In order to enable small-scale craft vendors to stay in the area, however, the landlord established new co-operative type premises in another space.



Map 2. Culture driven building conversions in Helsinki and their current use.



## “MAKING TORIKORTTELIT A PLACE (TO BE)”: DESIGN INFLUENCE AND REVITALISATION

In the midway mark of the project in 2012, Helsingin Leijona Oy took the initiative to re-evaluate what it is that real estate development means in this specific context and established a new strategy giving direction to the project. Marketing and communications started to take a bigger role in the development work as it was clear that these areas needed further emphasis. As a correlating development, the World Design Capital (WDC) year in 2012 spurred design influence and activated the City and citizens to thinking about city development in fresh ways.

As a part of the new concept, Kokoro & Moi designed an award-winning brand identity for Torikorttelit, leading the way for managing the revitalisation as a place branding initiative. Helsingin Leijona Oy recognised that a brand as a promise only functions if the content fulfils the expectations or promises that are communicated (Anholt, 2009). Helsingin Leijona Oy curates the experiences offered in the area which are to deliver what the marketing has stated and the brand has promised. The visual image comes alive through a range of different uses and functions as an important part of creating a holistic brand.

Studying a recently finished renovation project of city-owned buildings as a revitalisation project gives insight into what opportunities can be detected to better manage our built environment. The approach has included actions to design and steer the future of the area by developing a strategy, a concept and a brand. It is thus relevant to study the role of design in this project. The role of design depends on the definition of design in the context of real estate development. Could the question “how has design been employed in Torikorttelit thus far?” highlight how design is perceived now? Zooming out and looking at the bigger picture, the aim is to understand whether design can play a part in

a positive and sustainable progression of urban development. Could real estate development be a fruitful context for design to extend its role in order to reach these goals?

## CARING FOR THE (BUILT) ENVIRONMENT - PERSONAL MOTIVATION

My background in architectural studies is what led me to find the Creative Sustainability degree at Aalto University. I saw it as an opportunity to learn more about the social impact of changes in the built environment which come with building projects. I did not see the architectural perspective sufficient enough to understand the use and life cycle of buildings. I wanted to understand more about the social aspects and how it would be possible to lead or steer towards positive behaviour in treating the built environment.

By positive behaviour I refer to aspects of sustainability. I do not mean “high-tech green buildings” that perform well in ecological assessments, but instead the way people act, think and take care of their environments. Is there something we can learn from environmental protection that spurs from the sentiment of caring for the nature around us? Caring for the environment is well recognised as a catalyst for the protection of nature, one of the main developments taken towards a hopefully more sustainable future. In the same manner as this caring manifests in better behaviour towards the nature around us, caring could be a practice of protection when speaking of the built environment.

Sustainable development is commonly separated into three pillars which point out the different aspects of sustainability: social, economical and environmental (Caradonna, 2014). These pillars are each to be considered, and human activity in these three aspects may steer the way towards a more sustainable future. Out of the three pillars, the case of Torikorttelit concerns the social and economic aspects. The case is a public sector project concerning the City and its citizens in an economic and social sense. The way the



Photo: Jussi Hellsten



Photo: Maija Astikainen

case is looked at is through learning from the environmental pillar. What can be learned from taking care of the built environment in a foresightful manner as we as humanity have been learning to take care of the environment? The way I consider design playing a part in the case is through looking at how design can play a part in encouraging positive behaviour.

I recognise my skillset and personal interests coming together in the study at hand. The historically relevant buildings act as a stage for social interaction, building upkeep, caring of buildings and strategic renovations. These are all parts of the practices of sustainable real estate development where the human behaviour and activity is not necessarily harmful to its environment, but I believe it can preserve our cities and lead to positive changes. Helsingin Leijona Oy has presented great care and dedication in how the buildings are used and treated. Studying what has been done in the revitalisation project thus far and what have been the successful changes may reveal how sustainable real estate development can be led. The case of Torikorttelit is a unique opportunity to create a case study of a project in Helsinki where care for the built environment has been taken into consideration.

Throughout my studies in Creative Sustainability I prioritised to attend courses offering insights into the emerging ways design is included in the public sector work. I found that design in this area has shown great potential in finding creative solutions by changing thinking and involving more actors in decision making (Demos Helsinki, 2015). Studio course work at Aalto gives the opportunity to learn through real life cases how design can be involved in the public sector. The course titled Design for Government (Design for Government, 2017) best shone light into this domain through projects with ministries as clients. Our interdisciplinary design team consisting of Ekaterina Perfilyeva, Veikko Isotalo, Marija Erjavec and I proposed a systemic intervention that would motivate strategic upkeep of buildings. The project titled:

In Good Company researched opportunities and challenges in managing the current building stock from the public sector point of view (Erjavec, Isotalo, Menestrina, Perfilyeva, 2016).

Later on, in another Aalto design course titled Designing for Services (Co-ID, 2017), we worked in the municipal sector with the City of Espoo. The course provided a good understanding of the difference of design being included on a strategic level from design only being employed in the periphery through consults and commissions (Mattelmäki, 2017). These two courses built a good foundation for understanding how design can make an impact in the public sector and what its biggest challenges are. The practical and theoretical experience in design used in the public sector has been essential in order to take up the study of design in the publicly owned Torikorttelit.





# A RESEARCH COMMISSION IN A REAL-WORLD CONTEXT

---

## 2.

---

### PROJECT COMMISSION FROM HELSINGIN LEIJONA OY

As the manager of the revitalisation project of Torikorttelit, Helsingin Leijona Oy has set strategic goals for the area. 2017 marks the last year of phase one in the project which started in 2007. In the beginning of this 10th year of working, the company set forward a project to document the work done thus far in a format of an extensive final report. Rather than just an account of the progress, Helsingin Leijona Oy identified the opportunity to further analyse the learnings of the project. Helsingin Leijona Oy aims to deliver insights that could be used by the city of Helsinki in future projects. In order to reach these conclusions, the company commissioned the report to three master's thesis students from different departments of Aalto University.

The company recognised the value of a critical and theoretical study in analysing the revitalisation project. The final report was a paid commission to three student researchers from different fields who offered analytical perspectives to the work done. The study covers a comprehensive view of the revitalisation project. The report was written in Finnish over the period of seven months, finishing in September of 2017.

The commission of the research also included the individual master's theses of each student. The theoretical and empirical research was conducted in parallel with the report work. The conclusions of the three theses were included in the findings chapter of the final report. In this way, the report also concluded new information and future suggestions for public real estate development projects. The

three theses topics were clarified after an initial period of a few months of general research on Torikorttelit and Helsingin Leijona Oy. The students looked for the most valuable input their respective fields could offer to the larger aim of the client.

The three approaches to studying urban development and the respective thesis topics were:

**Macro perspective:**  
**Jenna Isokuortti, Aalto Master's in Real Estate Economics: Forces of change and their possible influences on the retail property market in the Helsinki metropolitan area - case in Helsinki city centre**

**Micro perspective:**  
**Esko Valtteri Vuorio, Aalto Master's in Real Estate Finance: Efficient ways for cities to conduct industrial policy and urban planning related to urban space and urban regeneration - Case Torikorttelit**

**User-centered perspective:**  
**Jutta Menestrina, Aalto Master's in Creative Sustainability: Discovering opportunities for design-driven real estate development. Comparing perceptions on of design project progress from two viewpoints in the case of Torikorttelit**

## EXPERIENCE-DRIVEN REVITALISATION IN TORIKORTTELIT

The client, Helsingin Leijona Oy, had identified the need for the study of “opportunities for design-driven real estate development”. The value of looking into the benefit of design had come apparent from their experience and through examples in the public sector. Helsingin Leijona Oy commissioned this work to a thesis worker to thoroughly assess the findings and define the role of design in the specific area.

After I had received the commission, I proceeded towards defining the scope of the study and defining the research questions. The challenge was to narrow down the study to a manageable, yet valuable scope.

The emphasis of the study quickly became the time between 2012 and 2017. The biggest change within the project had happened in 2012 when the team started to grow as in-house skills were acquired. This change was set forward through a tendering process for a new marketing-communications partner. The winning competition entry suggested a comprehensive branding concept for the area instead of solely launching a marketing campaign. This conclusion underlined that a bigger team was needed.

As of 2012, a creative team of professionals with diverse backgrounds has coordinated the project. The expertise and skills they bring to the table range from event production to advertising. The team prioritises areas such as marketing and communications and hospitality. This is an unorthodox approach to real estate development where the norm is managing properties through a more commercial perspective. Similarly to Hernberg's (2017) description of the role of an “urban agent” as a moderator, Helsingin Leijona Oy has practiced the facilitation of discussion between the many stakeholders involved in order to create understandings and share visions for a better Helsinki.

Through relentless negotiation with stakeholders and through displaying persistence in work methods, the team carried out their vision of revitalisation through content producing. The team managed to take cultural aspects into consideration through emphasising experiences and producing interesting content for visitors. Torikorttelit became a laboratory for creative and cultural area development. The way user experience was placed as a driving force to lead the project underlines how the project may be described as user-centered revitalisation.



Photo: Maija Astikainen



# FOCUSING THE RESEARCH

The opportunity to work with a client whose end goals and vision of caring and revitalising a complex of old buildings seemed to match my interest, aspirations and expertise. With my interest in caring and handling old buildings from a sustainability point of view, I had found a case study presenting an example of finding appropriate uses for old buildings. Design as the driving force to finding the best possible uses for buildings was the reason I had ventured from architecture to design. The human-centred approach in this project was clear and a valuable area to study. Yet it was obvious that the topic of design remained very broad, much too broad for a thesis study. The process of taking the first step towards a specific path and topic was fuzzy and concluding the correct research questions for this thesis was not straightforward.

The client commissioned this thesis to look into the role of design in real estate development. It became apparent that it would be necessary to find out about the design initiatives and projects conducted thus far by Helsingin Leijona Oy. From within these projects, I could analyse the data to draw conclusions on how design has been a part of real estate development and then give suggestions for its future role.

In my first interviews with members of Helsingin Leijona Oy, the conflicts and also the real potential of a structured research started to reveal itself. The study into differing perceptions of parties taking part in design projects was seen as a worthwhile opportunity to draw conclusions leading to suggestions for the use of design in real estate development. In this study, the perceptions of Helsingin Leijona Oy as the procurer of design and designers involved in working with Torikorttelit are examined separately in order to reveal inconsistencies.

Helsingin Leijona Oy is referred to as a procurer since their role is to acquire designers services for their use. Generally designers refer to procurers as clients, as from their point of view the client is who they deliver their services for. As the relevant juxtaposition is to compare two

active counterparties, the comparison will be made between procurers and designers. In this thesis the term client will only be used when referring to a non active participant in a design procurement.

# THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Based on the early stage research and the analysis of the first interviews with the client, the opportunities for this thesis are best defined in the following research questions:

- Research question 1:

How do the procurers’ and designers’ perceptions of the design projects included in the real estate development project of Torikorttelit differ from each other?
- Research question 2:

What are the suitable ways to employ design in real estate development projects according to the findings from the case of Torikorttelit?

As a scope of study for this thesis, these questions aim to define plausible opportunities for the organisation as a procurer of design. Some commentary and especially the link to the academic discussion will also touch on the discussion on the role of the designer in real estate development.



# RELEVANT LITERATURE ON DESIGN DEFINITIONS, PERCEPTIONS & ROLES

---

## 3.

---

### LOOKING FROM WITHIN AND OUTSIDE THE FIELD OF DESIGN

In order to analyse and compare the viewpoints of both the procurer and the designer, I will attempt to construct a review of what it means to look at design from these different roles. The comparison of perceptions requires an understanding of how different viewpoints are constructed. This literature review uncovers different theories affecting how these outlooks take shape. The designer is looking from inside their field to the outside and thus has a different standpoint than the procurer. The procurer is looking at design from the outside, and what affects their impression is the usefulness of design to their work.

Helsingin Leijona Oy as a procurer of design possesses a specific degree of design knowledge and competency which affects the procuring process and relationships with the designers they work with. In this review, I will look into this perspective of looking at design as a procurer but also in a wider sense. I take into consideration a more general understanding and definition of design from outside the field in order to grasp how design is seen.

All the designers who participated in the empirical study have different backgrounds in design. These backgrounds will not be specified for the sake of anonymity, but all the designers can be considered to have a high level of design competency because they are known to be experienced senior practitioners with backgrounds in academia.

This literature review will mainly concentrate on design literature, as its first and foremost function is to build the background for the different perceptions. The wider connection to the discussion of the role of design in real estate development will be discussed in chapter 7.

## BENEFITS OF DESIGN

Design has been adapted as a way to improve efficiency and results by more and more fields in the past few decades. Especially in the field of management, design methods have been eagerly taken to use (Verganti, 2014). Design spurs innovation and introduces new types of thinking and problem-solving to businesses looking to perform effectively. UK Design Council has researched and published an account of the benefits of adapting and manifesting design in companies (Dorst, 2015). Their results express economical benefits as well as proof of improvements in efficiency.

In her research Johansson takes part in the discourse on the progression of design and divides the conversation into two approaches (Johansson, 2013). The first approach is titled “design thinking” and studies how design is and could be used outside of the field of design. The second approach, “designerly thinking”, on the other hand studies how designers think and work within the field. This division helps to explain the progression of the field dividing it into two branches. One branch concentrates on explaining what design is, and the other branch is a more reflective study into designers’ skills and competencies. The design thinking discourse aims for a reductivist theory while the designerly thinking builds “an academic construction of the professional practice” (Johansson, 2013:123).

The different perspectives of the designer and the procurer are affected by this division. The different discourses are a prevalent aspect to consider when comparing perceptions. As someone who is interested in design, the procurer takes part in the design thinking practice as an outsider to the field. The designers in their part are practitioners and therefore practice

designerly thinking through being immersed in the evolving field. Both parties aim to improve their practices by becoming better in using design for their respective needs.

As mentioned, design adds value to companies’ work (Verganti, 2014), mainly through team members adapting design as way of creative problem solving in an organisation. Design adding value may also be done through procuring design from outside the company. Procurements include all types of design projects from problem-solving through creative thinking to more traditional aesthetic improvements. To expand from the design as thinking discourse presented above, I will look into design definitions from the field of design to build a comprehensible picture of all possible ways of employing design. From opening these definitions, I aim to build a wider basis for the comparison of the perceptions of procurers and designers.

## THE COMPLEXITY OF DEFINING DESIGN

As with the division to “design” and “designerly” describing different design practices (Johansson, 2013), there is also a need to differentiate how design activities are described inside and outside the field. In his research Buchanan (2001) states that pushing the definitions has been important in order for the field of design to keep evolving. It is then essential to analyse how design is seen as a practice from the outside in order to understand how the evolving of the field can be kept up with or whether design is growing increasingly hard to understand. In Buchanan’s view the evolving definitions should be kept to the academic discussion in design due to the fact that “it certainly does not serve the purposes of communication with the general public” (2001:10).

A team member of Helsingin Leijona Oy described design as a word that “enables many things and new thinking by not being easy to define” and said that “the word itself forces to innovate”. These comments point out a different view to how design being difficult to define might be also

seen as an opportunity. The remark resonates with the idea that designers as professionals are capable of embracing ambiguity as a continuous process (Manzini, 2011). Embracing ambiguity is seen as an asset within the field, but this shows that it might also be beneficial outside the field.

Ambiguity and flexibility are fluid terms which do not make it easier to promote design as a service. Manzini elaborates that design should be communicated from inside the field to the outside by presenting how it can be of benefit in emerging ways, but concludes that it is difficult to do. The problem, he says, is in the way design is currently promoted by narrowing it down to a “solution-oriented discourse— a mere narration of the techniques used and the effectiveness of its results” (2016:56). According to him, this notion exemplifies how it is then difficult to communicate the ways design can be of benefit in new areas always in new ways.

In recent years, there has been a growing need for ways to explain design, which has reinforced the practice of using examples as it is an efficient way of describing design activities. The examples may be simplified descriptions, but they are essential to present and communicate what design is. Design has begun to have more and more reference projects and precedents to communicate its benefit in new fields, simultaneously growing a large library of examples. Systematic case creation has been used as a tool especially in design functioning in the public sector (Design Driven City, 2016). In Helsinki from 2013 to 2015, an initiative called Design Driven City (DDC) was strategically built in a way that allowed the designers in the city context to experiment with design in different fields and communicate the results to the wide network of stakeholders in the City, thus increasing the amount of examples available.

Manzini describes the reasoning to contest the practice of creating case examples in the following way: “in emerging design, project results are complex, hybrid, dynamic entities, and we do not yet have language for talking about them” (2016:56). He continues that these projects do not have a “history to compare

them with, or until now, arenas in which to discuss them”. Initiatives like Design Driven City actively pursue the involvement of more and more people in design projects and ways to make design more accessible. In the context of Helsinki, Design Driven City had an audience and an arena, which Manzini described as missing in most situations. As design was experimented with as a tool, the aim was to learn as much as possible and also to spread this knowledge systematically.

Design can provide benefits to the many fields it may be adapted to, as it is seen as a problem-solving field that connects practice with theory in its application (Buchanan, 1992). Design has been suggested to be an approach to handling wicked problems by offering new solutions to the increasingly complex problems we are facing as a society (Buchanan, 1992). Especially in regard to the challenges of climate change, there are problems for which completely new solutions are needed. The risk that can be detected is that designers are considered to be taking a bigger bite than they can chew. Designers battle in presenting the field as a “mode of inquiry” rather than “a distinct professional or technical competency”(Amatullo, 2015:162). When design is looked at as a competency, it may seem as if designers are trying to be “omnipotent” by looking to solve big societal problems (Binder, 2011). This type of labelling does not benefit the field as it may look like designers are venturing into fields beyond their capabilities. Design needs to be presented as an opportunity to offer new solutions and not as an all-powerful answer.

## DIFFERENT TYPES OF DESIGN IN DESIGN THEORY

Even though design used as a practice for problem-solving has grown in popularity, the attention cannot be completely shifted to solely thinking of design as this type of a process. A big part of procuring design is still built from traditional design services. Traditional design includes practices such as product or graphic design. For the sake of understanding the viewpoint of the procurer, it is useful to look at

the different types of design a procurer might run into.

In this section, an overview of design theory describes these different types of design existing today. The overview is solely based on design literature, as the section is predominantly a glance of the designers’ perspective. The review of different types of design helps to build a coherent picture of how design has evolved and what is meant by design today. The overview will then be used to analyse how a procurer sees the landscape of design services.

In an influential article, Design Research and the New Learning, Buchanan (2001) divided the progression of design into four orders. Buchanan spoke of orders, as in his view, these are places for design to progress or rethink its nature. These places include different design activities within them and allow the activity to progress in its own space. The way different design activities are divided in orders paints a picture of all the types of activities design may be. This is an important notion for increasing design understanding: while one type of design may be getting more attention, the other fields exist and develop in their respective domains and in parallel. All the orders still influence each other and help the different activities to evolve.

Buchanan categorizes the orders in the following way:

**Graphic design:**  
Includes a wider array than the name states. What in the past was solely graphic design has evolved first to visual communication and then to communication design.

**Industrial design:**  
As the name suggests, includes product development and describes design of physical “things”.

**Interaction design:**  
Includes taking into consideration how humans relate to each other. The activity of designing interactions includes creating or orchestrating experiences. Products are included in the field as designers consider the way the user interacts with the designed object. Interaction is also being designed with digital products and services.

**Environmental design:**  
Is the act of designing larger systems. Systems may mean design in engineering such as urban planning, transport systems or architecture on a large scale. Systems can be considered in a more abstract way as well, when thinking of behaviour in a system. Systems thinking and design combined, especially when considering

opportunities for sustainable solutions, is a fruitful combination of fields.

The first two orders, graphic and industrial design, may seem like the most traditional activities and in the past, the word design mainly referred to only these two areas. The two latter orders, interaction and environmental design, have offered the field the places to progress as design influence has expanded in the later centuries. The first two orders signified material and aesthetic aspects, while the latter two are more about behaviour and processes. The aesthetic and material are still important aspects, but not as prominent fields of study like they were in the past (Buchanan, 2001).

Thus far, looking into literature in design, I have attempted to point out moments and examples of where and why perceptions of design may conflict inside and outside the field. The four orders by Buchanan explain how the field has kept evolving in its different practices. This can be useful to note with the perception comparison. The design professionals are more likely to see the four orders progressing in parallel, while the procurers are less likely to draw a picture of the whole landscape of design. This is something to bear in mind with the comparison analysis.

The example of service design was brought up in the research process several times. Service design is a part of interaction design, one of the latter two, fast progressing orders (Buchanan, 2001). It seems as if service design in Finland is taking attention away from design as a wider field. Instead of working out and expanding the understanding of design as a whole, more effort is directed at defining solely one type of design.

PRESENTING DESIGN USE THROUGH LADDERS

For a company that is looking to gain from adapting design and looking to increase their knowledge of design, it is useful to look into studies of design use. Studies about the benefits have been published based on the information

gathered through interviewing companies with experience in using design (UK Design Council, Danish Design Center). These studies also look into what type of design has what type of benefit. Ramlau (2004) argues that the more advanced type of design a company has used, the higher the benefits are.

The Danish design ladder presented by Ramlau describes the progression of different uses of design in companies from no use to advanced use as follows:

- “1. No use of design. In these companies, design is a hidden aspect of product development. It is generally the task of nondesign disciplines to develop the functionality and aesthetics of a product.
- 2. Design as styling. Design is seen as the final styling of a product. The task may or may not be undertaken by professional designers.
- 3. Design as process. Design is not an end result, but rather a work method adopted at an early stage of product development and requiring the involvement of several different disciplines, including design.
- 4. Design as strategy. Design has been adopted as a central aspect of the company’s business base, used as a means of encouraging innovation, for instance.” (Ramlau, 2004:49)

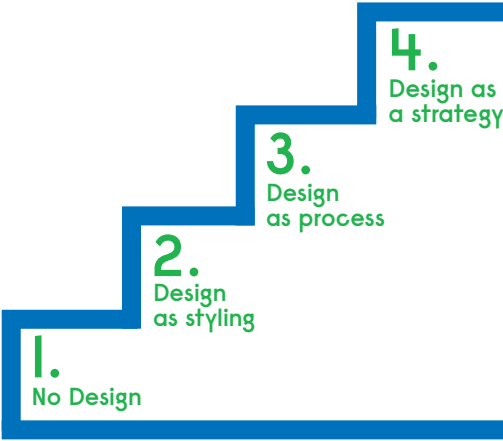
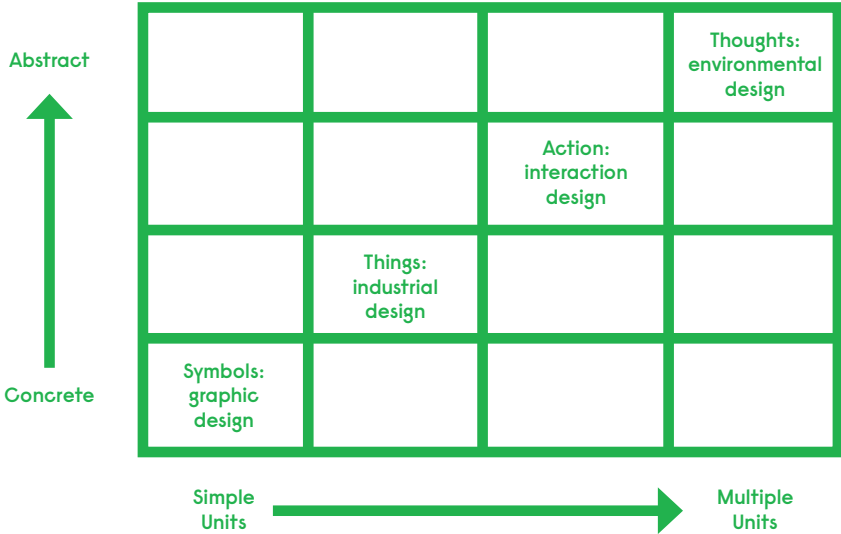


Diagram adapted from Nusem (2017)



Buchanan’s four orders of design in relation to one another (Golsby-Smith, 2015)

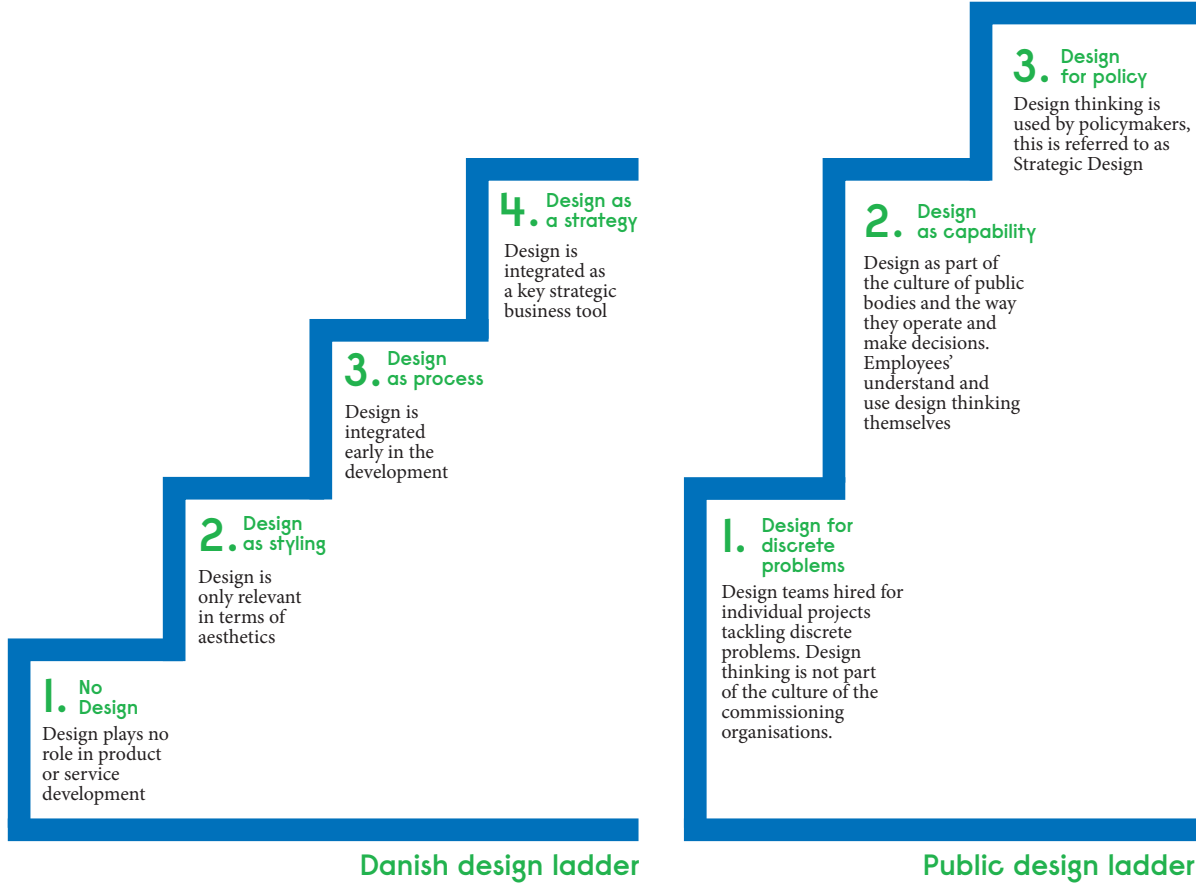


This ladder allows specific design types to be placed on a scale that helps see what degree design use is discussed. These descriptions are helpful to build design knowledge as they help with making connections according to previous knowledge on design. For example, service design would be placed on the third stage of this ladder, “design as process”. Service design is a practice in which the input from several disciplines is connected (Brink, 2016), thus placing it quite high on this scale.

The ladder model has been used to communicate design use in different domains. UK Design Council has presented their own ladder model called “Public sector design ladder” (2013) deriving from The Danish design ladder. Researcher Erez Nusem (2017) has taken these two ladders and placed them next to one another in a study to point out how the use of design differs in the private and public sectors. The first step of the public ladder is

comparable to the second of the Danish ladder. These steps include the use of design for specific purposes, such as graphics or communication design. The second step of the public ladder corresponds with the two higher ladders of the Danish ladder which describe processes. The public ladder goes beyond the Danish ladder by introducing another step: “design for policy”. This comparison shows that unless the two ladder models are kept separate, there is a high risk of confusion. Design use in these models is described solely in a specific sector.

As Helsingin Leijona Oy is at the same time a company and a part of the City of Helsinki, both ladders are relevant to the case. The Danish ladder more so, as it describes a company as a procurer. The public ladder is important for painting a picture of the design influence facilitated by the City of Helsinki. Helsingin Leijona Oy has been involved in the design activities organised by the City of Helsinki since 2012. The most prominent

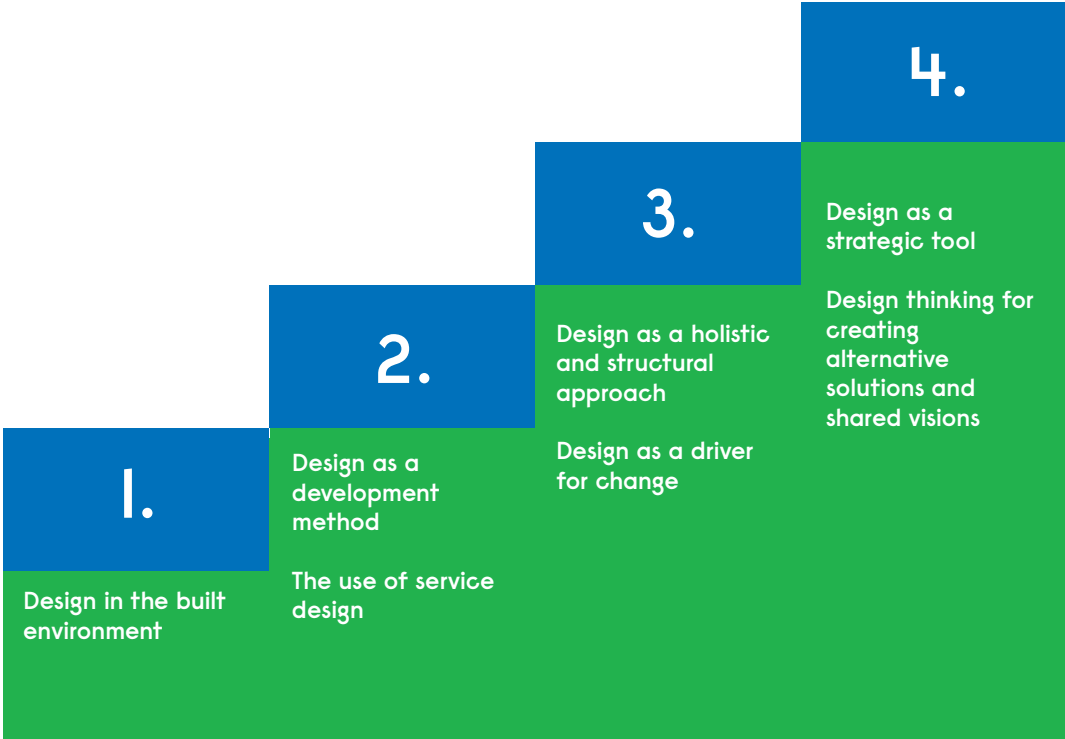


Diagrams adapted from Developing Design Capability in Nonprofit Organizations (Nusem, 2017)

design projects have been World Design Capital year (2017), Design Driven City (2017) and Helsinki Design Lab (2017). For example, with Design Driven City, the larger aim of the cities involved was threefold and presents well the type of influence that may be detected.

- 1. “A city that acknowledges and understands the meaning of design and uses it
  - 2. Business that is based on design competency and making use of design
  - 3. A status as a world leading city in utilising design”
- (Toimiva Kaupunki, 2016:19)

Helsinki has developed its own Helsinki City Design Ladder, which was presented during the Design Driven City initiative. Helsingin Leijona Oy has mentioned that they are familiar with this ladder. Thus it is important to paint a wider picture of the connection and its influence to this research project. The ladder differs from the previous two ladders presented in two ways:



Helsinki City Design Ladder Diagram adapted from the lecture slides of: Service Design and the City by Tiina-Kaisa Laakso-Liukkonen (2017)

it adapts a vocabulary more suitable for city development and includes two more advanced and more abstract steps.

Thus far I have described mainly aspects of design knowledge and understanding. The Finnish term for design understanding, “muotoiluymmärrys” (muotoilu=design and ymmärrys=understanding), is commonly used and it has been mentioned by designers and procurers working with Torikorttelit. Sections describing “Muotoiluymmärrys” are included in the final reports of both World Design Capital 2012 (2012) and Design Driven City (2016). It has even been stated in the Finnish design community that Helsinki has a certain “design DNA” as design is a well acknowledged part of the past, present and the future of the city. Such design knowledge is one part of design’s growing influence on the outside, but knowledge on its own is not enough to make a huge impact. The other part is having design competency, which means being able to adapt and practice design.

# DESIGN COMPETENCY

The second step of three on the Public design ladder includes a description of how organisations reach design capability to perform design in practice. The ladder includes the following statement: “Public sector employees not only work with designers, they understand and use design thinking themselves. Many design techniques are easily transferable to non-designers and can create significant efficiencies as part of day-to-day operations.” (UK Design Council, 2013:8).

Nusem (2017) points out that increasing the design competency of an organisation internally brings greater benefits than outsourcing design projects. He states that outsourcing may have benefits at first, but that building design competency will bring a greater long term effect and have financial benefits over recurrently hiring external consultants. As the in-house capabilities of an organisation are developed, the knowledge will also increase in a greater diffused rate, taking more members of the team on board.

Nusem (2017) also stresses the importance of motivation to foster design capabilities within an organisation. Motivation is essential for the organisation to benefit from taking design as a driving force. Individuals should be driven to take design into use. In almost all public sector examples, an authority drives the use of design and the different offices and staff are accountable for adapting the methods (Nusem, 2017). Within an organisation, design promotion must be led systematically to reach a model where the staff are comfortable and find design methods meaningful.

In Helsinki, design capability building has been promoted by public initiatives with events and workshops showcasing and testing design use. The initiatives are the same projects which were already mentioned in relation to awareness building: WDC and DDC. The design promotion activities are seen as catalysts for building design competency from within organisations (DDC,

2016). UK Design Council (2017) presents a similar approach in their own description section as they aim to spread the knowledge from up top to foster design use in organisations. They mention that the idea of fostering design in-house has sparked from good examples in the private sector. The benefit of the public sector is that design reaches an especially wide audience as it affects the lives of all citizens.

I have made the observation that adapting design into practice is divided into two ways: design as a way of thinking and the use of design methods. In design theory, great attention is paid on the design thinking side and less description of method adaptation can be found. It seems as if design thinking is the first requirement to foster the open consideration of methods for need.

Design thinking as a mindset is described as design attitude (Michlewski, 2008). When adapting a design attitude, one is able to take up different characteristics from how designers approach their work. The meaning of design attitude is best presented through the characteristics “Representing the Professional Culture of Designers” listed by Michlewski (2008: 378):

- “ ‘Consolidating multidimensional meanings’
- ‘Creating, bringing to life’
- ‘Embracing discontinuity and open-endedness’
- ‘Embracing personal and commercial empathy’
- ‘Engaging polysensorial aesthetics’ ”

These characteristics help with the task of adapting design methods to one’s own practice. Design methods are to be considered separately for each task at hand and choosing well requires design competency and confidence. Perhaps due to the ad hoc way of finding and using design tools, the emphasis on building design competency is not about learning about specific methods but instead learning to think like a designer. This adapted “design attitude” then helps making choices and building sets of tools.

Through presenting different aspects to building design capability, I want to highlight that there are no clear steps to take. Design is fostered in the public sector and this influences the general field but does not specify methods or tools for use. Design thinking opens up minds to creativity but does not necessarily lead to an incremental adoption of more and more ways to use design. It may even be seen as “enough” to just approach problem-solving in this new way of thinking and it is not seen important to develop design competency further.

# PROCURING DESIGN

Design understanding and building competency within an organisation are both vital in promoting the use of design and its benefits. They mainly concern design as thinking or as a process and not as a product. From the four orders (Buchanan, 2001) “products” and “communication” and from the Danish design ladder (2004) “design as styling” are aspects where design is more clearly described as a product or a specific service to be outsourced. It is essential to understand that procuring is a tool for recruiting and employing design. The Public design ladder summarises the capable design staff as “more adept at hiring design teams when required” (UK Design Council, 2013:8).

Outsourcing and procuring are seen as design capabilities (Bertola, 2003). These capabilities are affected by both the level of understanding design and the design competency of the procurer. When procuring is done systematically, it can be considered as knowledge circulation and adapted as a way to advance innovation and design (Bertola, 2003). Hence, procuring is a tool for learning for the organization itself.

Capability also means being able to recognise when to look for external services and where to look for suitable service providers. Skilful procuring requires being able to detect what type of design services to acquire. In some cases the best scenario is to build partnerships and in other cases it is better to look for consultancies for one-off projects. Consultants are perhaps

best used for the outside perspective use and partnership for strategic work.

For example, customer insight research through design methods offers the procurer an outsider’s view of their customers. This is something quite impossible to inquire by oneself when one is immersed in serving their own customers. In these cases the outsider’s view is important as a tool to take distance in order to gain perspective into one’s own work. As a procurer Helsingin Leijona Oy prefers to keep its distance in this manner in order to get the full benefit from the outside perspective and to gain fresh insight.

From the procurer’s point of view, it is important to note that services are acquired when there is a real need, and thus results are expected (Nusem, 2017). Designers are hired when a problem needs a solution, not to experiment and test ideas. Designers should consider the risks of promising too much, as has happened in some cases (Reason, 2013). These unfulfilled promises may result in clients becoming disappointed in the entire field.

The comparison of perceptions is a key element to understand the expectations of procurers as well as designers. The elements that build these expectations have to do with design knowledge and capacity, but still, it is not guaranteed that the two counterparties would be aware of each other’s level of knowledge. The one place to start to look at the procuring as sharing expectations is the start of a design project: brief giving and then the first steps of work.

# COMMUNICATION IN DESIGN PROJECTS

Lawson (2006) states that if a shared understanding is not established between designers and clients, the likelihood of confusion is substantial. Lawson continues to describe that a tool for mutual understanding can be beneficial for communications between clients and designers. This tool is most often the design brief given to designers when clients reach



out for exterior help. A brief by a client can be informal or formal, done in a format or only communicated verbally. What a brief by a client aims to do is to describe the problem by bringing focus to a challenge (Boyer, 2011).

A brief or briefing are words with many meanings and they are used in different fields in different ways (Blyth, 2001). It is important to understand that a design brief should not be a description of a task from one party to another, but instead “an evolutionary process of understanding” (Blyth, 2001). Design briefs should be collaboratively worked on by the designer and the procurer (Phillips, 2012) as both parties are equally responsible for the outcome. When a brief functions as a tool for reaching a shared understanding, it sets the tone for cooperation in a project.

Procurers of design come from many fields and briefings often have different procedures and formats in different lines of work. For example, in architecture, a brief is a statement of requirements by a client (O’Gorman, 1998) differing largely from the definition of a design brief. Thus it becomes clear that even in the case of different design tasks, the brief may have a different purpose. A designer always faces a new situation with each different task given from a new field they work with.

It should be noted that the extent of complete design briefs may seem like a burden for a procurer who is used to giving quick work orders instead of working on briefs with designers (Phillips, 2012). However, if no meeting is scheduled until the final presentation of the work is done, the work progress may become restricted as no questions may be asked. If circumstances change along the way, they cannot be reflected on in the project. This is because the brief only described one possible solution direction (Blyth, 2001). If the result does not answer a real need, the project will be of no use. A complete design brief and discussions on its extent between designers and procurers actually makes projects faster and thus saves resources as the aforementioned risks can be avoided (Ryd,

2007). When the project is aiming at the right purpose, the results will answer the correct need.

Designers may also challenge the original brief with a rebrief if an agreement has not been reached. Designers might feel forced to challenge a brief if a common processing of the task at hand has not been concluded. Leitner (2013) describes this re-defining as a tendency of designers. This tendency and constant questioning may feel like a burden to the procurer. In some cases, rebriefs end up bringing better results than the procurer might have imagined, but they do pose the risk of causing tension between the designer and the procurer.

## AN OVERVIEW OF DESIGN PROJECT ROLES AND DYNAMICS

Lucy Kimbell states that design in practice needs to be understood as a relational activity. It cannot be separated from the practices of the people involved. Kimbell goes on to describe the working relationship between designers and procurers as follows: “stakeholders are co-designers and designers are another kind of stakeholder” (Kimbell, 2009a:15). This description of their relationship highlights how in design projects the different members should be perceived as working together. If the activities are kept separate, it restricts the involvement of the client.

Designers constantly venture into different fields with different clients. Until now I have presented ideas of how design is approached from the outside and how this “outsider role” affects the projects. It cannot be left unmentioned that designers meet a similar challenge with the myriad of professions they work with through procurements. In these fields, designers require the support and briefing from the experts to be able to deliver results. Design methods highlight the importance of involving stakeholders in design work and enable cooperation, which is why design and designers are able to work with different clients.

For designers, being capable of working with different disciplines is not just a matter of being familiar with the field, but also a matter of understanding the different work methods they should adapt to. Design researcher Kamil Michlewski lists some of the many requirements in working across fields: “Each situation and profession will bring its own preferences for variables such as speed of closure, required detail of the organizational brief, level of acceptable ambiguity and fluidity of the assignment, depth of aesthetic appreciation, and many more” (2008:387). In order for the designer to work most efficiently, these should be communicated and the level of understanding should be established.

An understanding may be reached by synthesising or integrating separate established fields together with the help of design methods (Kimbell, 2009b). Working together is possible through workshops, design games and service blueprinting to name a few examples of design tools. Kimbell (2009b:4) goes on to highlight the branch of service design as “necessarily multidisciplinary since it involves the close working together of designers, managers and stake-holders”. This has been an important step for design to be able to work in different fields.

In a sense procuring may be considered as inviting designers as “extensions” of a team. It should be noted that dynamics change with each ensemble. Furthermore, each design task is different from the next, making it more difficult to build frameworks. It should be taken into consideration that each project is unique, so while some comparisons and suggestions may be made, it is essential that the projects are built to answer the needs of specific situations.



# RESEARCH APPROACH: FORMING & COMPARING PERCEPTIONS

---

## 4.

---

### DESCRIPTION OF THE RESEARCH APPROACH

I was invited to work with Helsingin Leijona Oy to conduct research for the purpose of defining the role of design in real estate development. The research for this thesis is conducted in a professional context by researching real-life examples and interviewing the stakeholders involved with the revitalisation of Torikorttelit.

The research methods are drawn from qualitative research methodology in the social sciences. I applied the methodology in the role of a designer and adapted it into a professional context. The social sciences offer suitable methods for design research as design is firmly based in practice and qualitative examples are important to study. In this thesis, the methodology is not applied directly, as it would be in the field of social sciences, but instead tailored to suit the design research case at hand.

In addition to my role as a researcher I also took part in a few design sessions through being immersed in the work in the role of a designer. I count this immersion as a qualitative inquiry or design ethnography: “a front-end design research method” (Rodgers, 2008:1). The immersion into the role of a designer was only used as a tool for empathic observation and as a source of inspiration.

### TORIKORTTELIT AS A CASE STUDY

I selected several methods, which was required because of the nature of the research. As the revitalisation of Torikorttelit is a single example of real estate development, I treated it as a case study to be able to make



some generalisable conclusions (Eisenhardt, 2007). Eisenhardt in her research mentions the risk of theories seeming subjective, as they are drawn from working so near to a specific example. With Torikorttelit as a case study, the research methods were chosen with this in mind, acknowledging that a degree of subjectivity will be included through the design research approach.

Eisenhardt (2007) describes case studies as suitable research methods when an experiment or a specific project can be treated as a unit to analyse. She continues to emphasize that theories may be constructed from these examples when the empirical evidence is drawn from a case study as an “analytical unit”. At the end of phase one of the ten-year revitalisation project, Helsingin Leijona Oy, as well as the City of Helsinki, are looking back at the project progression. This moment of the project may be looked at as a review of the work done, isolating the example to a “midway goal” and an “analytical unit” in a larger context.

The aim is to propose future models of employing design in real estate projects especially for the City of Helsinki. Thus, building theories (Eisenhardt, 2007) from Torikorttelit in its context in the real world is appropriate. Furthermore, the larger report of which this thesis is a part of includes further suggestions with the aim of building generalisable models of revitalisation in real estate development. This model will touch on several fields which affect real estate development projects and present design as part of the bigger whole.

Design research within a real-world context requires some considerations to be made before initiating the work with a client. The research is conducted in practice and information is gathered from the stakeholders involved. As a researcher, I represented the client as the aim of the commission was to conduct research for the company. The professional relationships of Helsingin Leijona Oy had to be taken into

consideration in the research process. Thus it was especially important to keep interviewees anonymous. As the aim is to give further suggestions and proposals for working with design, the main focus is on the results, not on the analysis of past projects.

## MULTIPLE RESEARCH METHODS

### Desk research

Helsingin Leijona Oy offered materials from along the years as a background study. This material consisted of City of Helsinki official documents, Helsingin Leijona Oy plan documents and some reports by consultants to name a few. The material was divided among the three student researchers. A media coverage overview was an important step towards understanding how the project has been portrayed. Helsingin Leijona Oy also receives media reports, which were used as a basis to map out how media coverage has changed over the years. The project has been in the public eye and thus it was important to acknowledge the reporting of the revitalisation.

The main material for the design approach and this thesis were the documents from the designers involved with Helsingin Leijona Oy. These consisted mostly of presentation materials made for Helsingin Leijona Oy by the designers and also documents made in collaboration with designers and the client for the use of Helsingin Leijona Oy for other purposes. Among the material were the presentations from 2012 when the project established its new brand identity and sharpened its strategy with the launch of the “New Old Town” concept.

### Observations

Observations are a typical method within design research. Torikorttelit as a physical site and the activities in the area are at the very heart of this research. Moving from paper to the street was important to do periodically in order



Photo: Jussi Hellsten



to avoid distancing oneself from the real-life aspects. Observations were made and analysed mainly in the beginning of the project as a way to get to know the client and their work. I also conducted systematic observations to determine where design might have been used. I used these observations as a basis to start discussions and interviews with the client to learn about their perception of what design means to them.

Literature review

The literature review concentrated on building a background for understanding the perceptions of the two parties: procurers and designers. The literature review as a research method helped to define the scope of the research as an overview into what discussions in design today are related to the study at hand. Related literature was especially found from recent developments in design in the public sector.

Stakeholder mapping

Stakeholder mapping as a design tool was used at the start of the project. The client was asked to validate the mapping which I had compiled from the information gathered through discussions and desk research of the network of people and city offices involved. The stakeholder mapping was used as an important tool for communication between the three thesis workers to establish common ground for the case study.

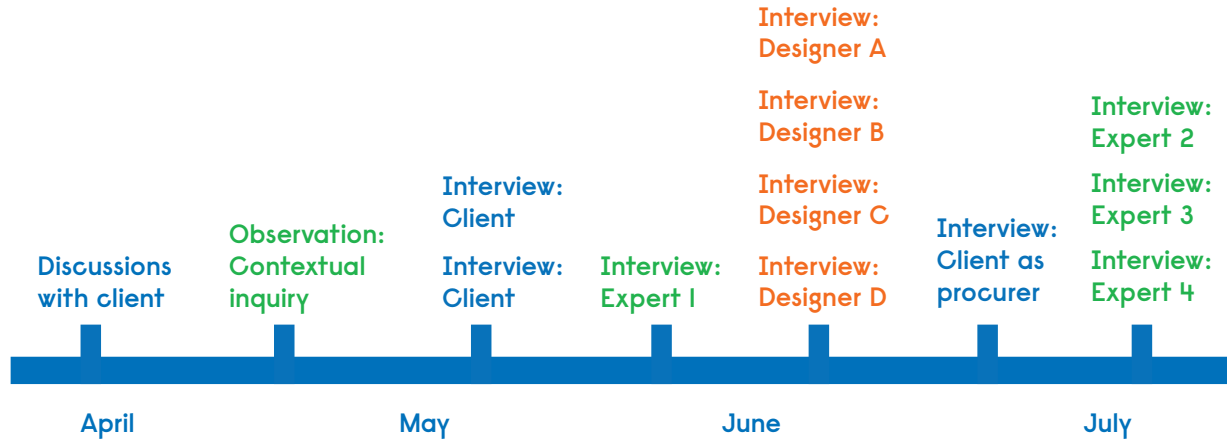
Interviews

The main information gathering method for this thesis was conducting interviews. The stakeholder mapping functioned as a guideline for choosing the interviewees. Some interviews were conducted in a workshop setting where I used designerly methods to facilitate the information gathering. All but one interview was conducted in Finnish. The transcripts were translated to English in order to use the material for this thesis.

INTERVIEWS CONDUCTED

I conducted ten 60-minute interviews. Out of the ten interviews, two were initial interviews with the client, four were expert interviews and four were designer interviews. The experts were interviewed about their knowledge of the case study and design in Helsinki, placing the study in a real-world context. The goal of the designer interviews was to inquire about the design projects they had performed in Torikorttelit from a designer’s point of view.

I would describe the interviews conducted as semi-structured themed interviews. Each interview had a set of questions and a protocol considered. The interviews were not constricted to the set of questions but instead they progressed in more of a conversational manner. The technique was loosely based on the “five times

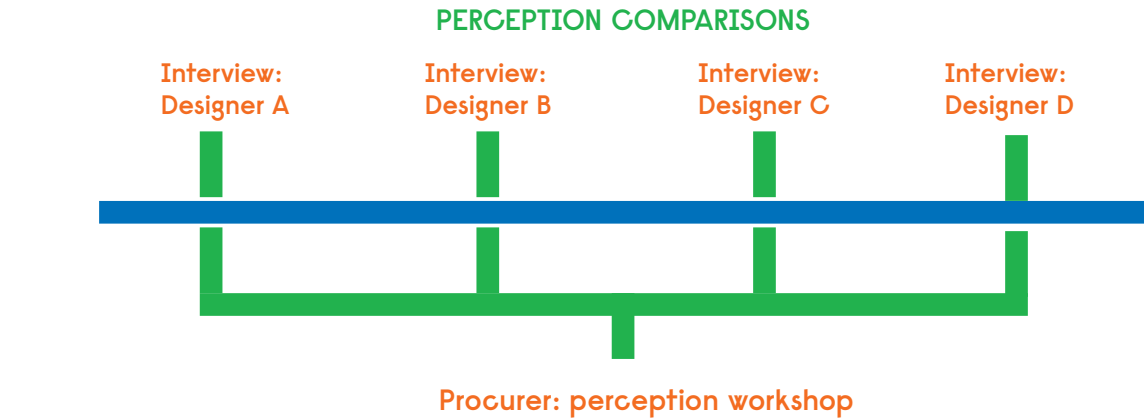


why” interview technique (Bulsuk, 2009) where the root causes of problems or questions are inquired by asking further questions instead of settling for the first answers.

Choosing to call the interviews themed interviews implies how the same themes of questions were covered in each interview. Following a structure built from the themes helped the interviews to flow freely while still being able to reach the goal of gathering information on the same topics. This was especially important in order to be able to compare the different perceptions in the analysis part. The themes were chosen after the first two interviews with the client and the first expert interview, as these inquiries functioned as a sufficient basis for the design projects thus far.

As the aim is to reveal different perceptions of the projects in question, it is necessary to preserve the anonymity of the interviewees. In some instances, different perspectives mean conflicting views. These conflicts may mean handling delicate information as the research in question is dealing with the client’s professional relationships. For the purpose of preserving the anonymity of the interviewees, the designers will be referred to as:

Designer A  
Designer C  
Designer B  
Designer D



Helsingin Leijona Oy is a company consisting of nine employees. Three members of the team took part in the interviews and discussions. The view of these team members of Helsingin Leijona Oy will be referred to as the procurer.

Perception comparison

In order to answer the posed research questions about “the differences in perceptions” and “the role of design”, a specific method needed to be taken in use. The aim of this method was to directly reflect on the research questions; hence, it functions as the backbone of this thesis. The comparison method was built on the basis of the themes chosen after the initial interview round.

Four designers were chosen as the sample for the interviews. These designers had each worked on different projects commissioned by Helsingin Leijona Oy. The projects are placed at different phases over the past five years of the revitalisation process. The commissions were different in size but comparable to one another as they were all projects from the last two orders of Buchanan’s listing, which describe the designing of processes instead of products.

Following the themed interviews, I started to recognise categories of answers. The themes had worked as a way to inquire in-depth information about the projects but remained at quite an

abstract level. In order to compare the perceptions, I defined the repeating categories within the projects. The categories function as a way to sort the information into different aspects of a work process.

As the final step in the empirical part of the research, I interviewed the client in order to formulate their perceptions of the same topics that were discussed with the designers. The process could be called a mini-workshop which I facilitated. Three team members from the procurer’s side were present. In order to gather information to target each category, I created a worksheet in which I used sticky notes to write down the views of the procurer. It was essential to have the physical material displaying all the categories and questions to be asked. The template as a visual reminder made it possible to gather the right scope of commentary from the procurer. In this manner, I was able to conclude the perception of the procurer in a 60-minute planned and paced workshop.

ANALYSIS METHODS

Coding

The categories defined from the designer interviews functioned as the basis for creating a data table. The table was used for two purposes: first as a basis for the worksheet to gather the information of the procurers’ perceptions and also to use as a coding method for the comparisons. The categories are placed on the left side and the four columns present the different design projects performed with different designers.

The designers’ views were placed on the table first after the themed interviews. Each category had one to five bullet points summarising the view of the designer. In the mini-workshop, the table was used as the worksheet for gathering information from the procurer without displaying the views of the designers. The procurers’ views were added to the table next to the designers’ views. Each column would then have two views next to one another.

	Procurement Designer A	Procurement Designer B	Procurement Designer C	Procurement Designer D
Category 1	<div></div> <div></div>	<div></div> <div></div>	<div></div> <div></div>	<div></div> <div></div>
Category 2	<div></div> <div></div>	<div></div> <div></div>	<div></div> <div></div>	<div></div> <div></div>
Category 3	<div></div> <div></div>	<div></div> <div></div>	<div></div> <div></div>	<div></div> <div></div>
Category 4	<div></div> <div></div>	<div></div> <div></div>	<div></div> <div></div>	<div></div> <div></div>
Category 5	<div></div> <div></div>	<div></div> <div></div>	<div></div> <div></div>	<div></div> <div></div>
Category 6	<div></div> <div></div>	<div></div> <div></div>	<div></div> <div></div>	<div></div> <div></div>
Category 7	<div></div> <div></div>	<div></div> <div></div>	<div></div> <div></div>	<div></div> <div></div>

Template for the perception comparison data table and worksheet.

As a coding method, I assessed how the perceptions corresponded with one another and marked the pairings with different colours according to the interpretations of views. Green represents the cases where both the procurer and designer agreed and perceived the project in a similar way. Yellow means that neither a conflict nor an agreement can be identified. Finally red represents the areas and cases where conflict was apparent.

Opportunity area mapping

The colour coded data table functions as the basis for identifying the instances where design has been successful and also where it has not been used to its full potential. Successful examples should be highlighted and interpreted into suggestions which ought to be followed in future projects. Unsuccessful instances reveal different intentions or proposals that were not fulfilled due to conflicting perspectives. Finding out the reasons behind the intentions not having been carried through is an opportunity to make conclusions and suggestions for how to avoid misconceptions in the future. This research aims to reveal how design can make an impact in real estate development. Giving concrete examples of how this can be done will exemplify the opportunity for making an impact.

The categories in the data table are either phases or processes in a project. These moments can be divided into concrete steps and suggestions for improvements. Instead of keeping the categories separate and delivering findings according to each phase, it became apparent that there are overlapping and connections between the categories. Thus after the data table had been colour coded, I divided the categories into opportunity areas connecting phases and processes that were linked or dependent on each other. The categories were bundled into three areas. This bundling allowed a more manageable manner of delivering suggestions according to the research.

Supporting analysis of all interview data

For the sake of making assessments and pointing out reasons to perceptions differing, I

saw it beneficial to make a supporting analysis of all the information gathered. In this analysis, I included information from all of the interviews conducted for the empirical study: procurers, experts and designers. This analysis was not done according to the categories detected in the perception comparison, but in-stead in a manner where all the data was taken into consideration. Avoiding using the interview protocol to structure data allows overarching themes and topics to merge naturally (Lucero, 2015). After analysing the material from all the interviews, only the relevant information to the chosen categories was used.

This extensive coding was done by using the affinity diagram method where ideas from interviews, written on sticky notes, are pinned on a wall. Affinity diagrams are commonly used to analyse data from contextual inquiries, especially in design (Lucero, 2015). The method is used to “externalize, make sense of, and organize large amounts of unstructured, far-ranging, and seemingly dissimilar qualitative data” (Lucero, 2015:232). By reading through all of the interviews, I recognized the relevant ideas starting to emerge in clusters. The clustering means connecting ideas from similar themes into groups.

Lucero describes the last stage of an affinity diagram exercise as “pruning the wall”. In this phase, I merged some clusters together and removed all the information from the wall that was not relevant to the perception comparison exercise. After this phase, I reduced the information into statements, which could be made by describing the clusters left on the wall. Some statements were descriptive sentences of what the clusters represented and others were simple conclusions. These statements remain as the written documentation of the affinity diagram.

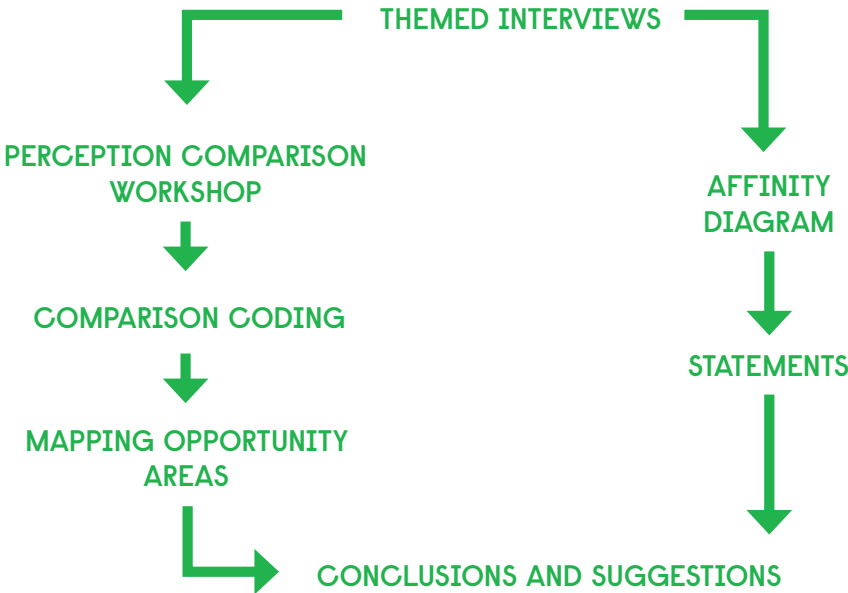
Merging the opportunity mapping and the affinity diagram


The perception comparison and the affinity diagram delivered different types of information for this study. The perception comparison

alone identified instances where designers and procurers have misunderstood each other. Some of these instances may be resolved simply by one of the two parties paying more attention to a specific phase. The comparison does not, however, go further into detail revealing deeper levels, or indirect solutions. Therefore the affinity diagram as an additional method, took in notice information from all the interviews, building a comprehensive understanding of the matters at hand. The affinity diagram statements require filtering to point out the conclusions valuable for this research.

The statements from the affinity diagram and the learnings from the perception comparison come together with the help of the opportunity area mapping. The defined opportunity areas offer a manageable format for delivering suggestions and identifying the most fruitful places to redefine. The three opportunity areas give focus to which statements are relevant to the aim of this thesis.

This diagram shows how the different phases of the empirical study come together to form the basis and format for the conclusions and suggestions.





# COLLECTING & ANALYSING EMPIRICAL RESEARCH MATERIAL

---

## 5.

---

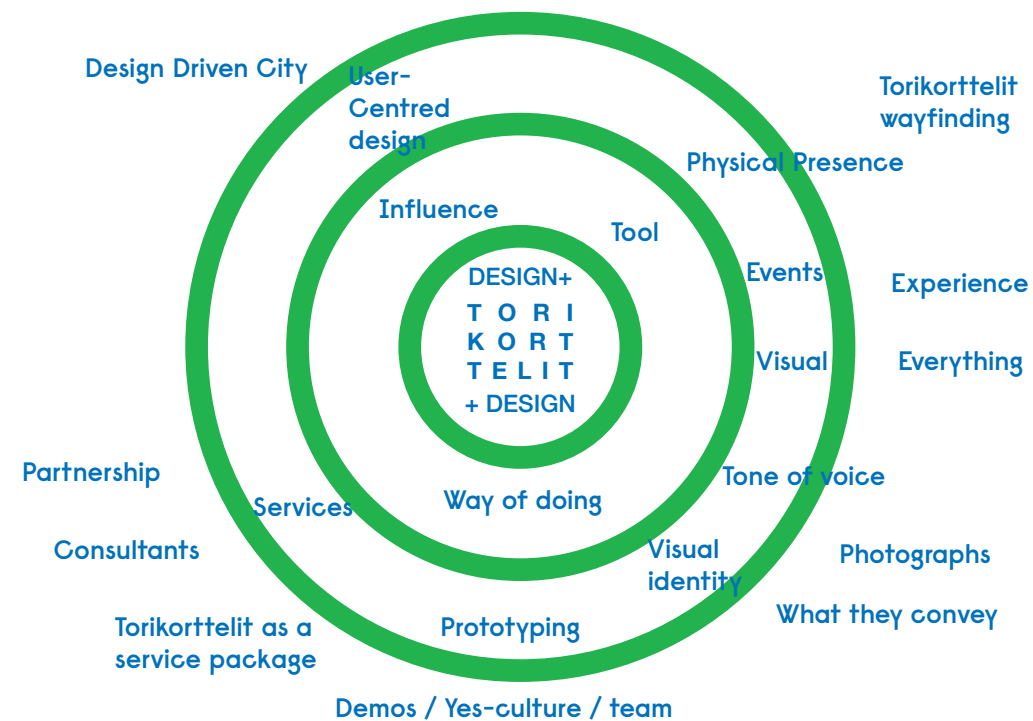
### GETTING TO KNOW THE ORGANISATION

Helsingin Leijona Oy team members were eager to find out whether a “design-driven real estate development” approach would be a fruitful direction. In our initial discussions, design was not pinned down to a specific type or field of design. The opportunity to study design in this context seemed fruitful and an open field to investigate. My task as a researcher was threefold: defining what is meant by design by the organisation now, what would be the most important directions for the future and what would be a valuable scope for the study.

In the two initial interviews with different members of Helsingin Leijona Oy, I started to gather a better understanding of their conception of design. The two interviewees described how they saw design in real estate development now and in the future. Together we concluded this in a mapping. What became evident from diving into design definitions in these interviews is that there was a turn of events on a mental level in 2012, after which design began to be understood in a wider sense. This happened at the time of the World Design Capital 2012 year events in Helsinki (World Design Capital, 2012). The events and lectures at the time were the catalysts for applying new type of design in Helsingin Leijona Oy.

The design understanding of the organisation includes different ways of thinking of design. This can be detected from the mapping, which combines different aspects and types of design. The use of design is seen above all as a way to create a holistic concept for the area. The client described how design can help to take into consideration every aspect of the experience of the visitor. On the top left corner





Helsingin Leijona Oy's view of how design has been useful in Torikorttelit .

user-centred design is written down and underlined, which highlights the experience-driven strategy for developing Torikorttelit. Experiences are partly built from different uses of design curated by Helsingin Leijona Oy.

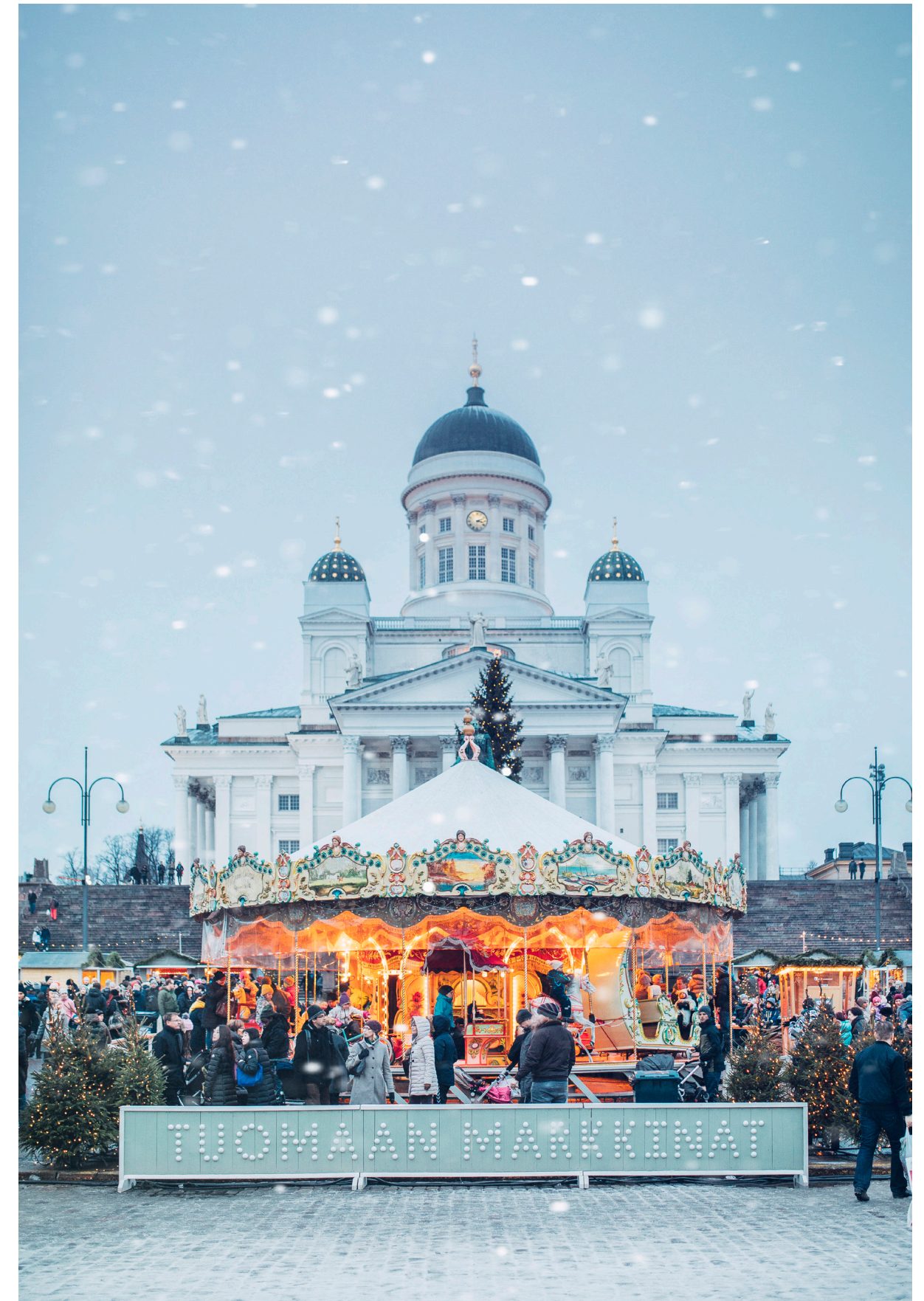
After mapping the design understanding of Helsingin Leijona Oy, I continued to further analyse how design methods were applied in practice. The company's design understanding consists of several applied methods such as the idea of prototyping and testing ideas. The mapping also included design by hired designers. For example, the visual image created for the company is listed.

I used the stakeholder mapping (appendix 1) to place all of the known designers in relation to Helsingin Leijona Oy. The client validated the mapping and also added some actors who were not yet mentioned. In this iterative way of working, I managed to analyse how design had been employed by using exterior design services and who had been involved. Design assignments with different designers vary in type and size. There are design activities from different orders

as presented by Buchanan (2001).

Design input from the first two orders, the more traditional definitions, are prominent in the physical presence of the area. The first order of design, "graphic design", includes the visual image of Torikorttelit and communications design in Torikorttelit. The second order, "Industrial design", consists of products such as elements in the space, signposts and branded items such as Torikorttelit beer bottles. I also include the interior design of the buildings of Torikorttelit in this category.

The last two orders are also evident in the revitalisation work of Torikorttelit, but harder to pin down as specific projects. Aspects that might be counted in the third order, "interaction design", are in fact a combination of several designers being brought together to make an impact in Torikorttelit. As an example, I will highlight Tuomaan Markkinat, a Christmas market which is an experience-driven service curated by Helsingin Leijona Oy. The experience consists of different elements of a service (Stickdorn, Schneider & Andrews, 2011) bring-



Kuva: Jussi Hellsten



ing together the work of the producers of Helsingin Leijona Oy and the exterior influence they invite to work with them. The elements procured are, for example, the visual concept by Laura Bergroth, graphic design by Kokoro & Moi and the documentation by professional photographers.

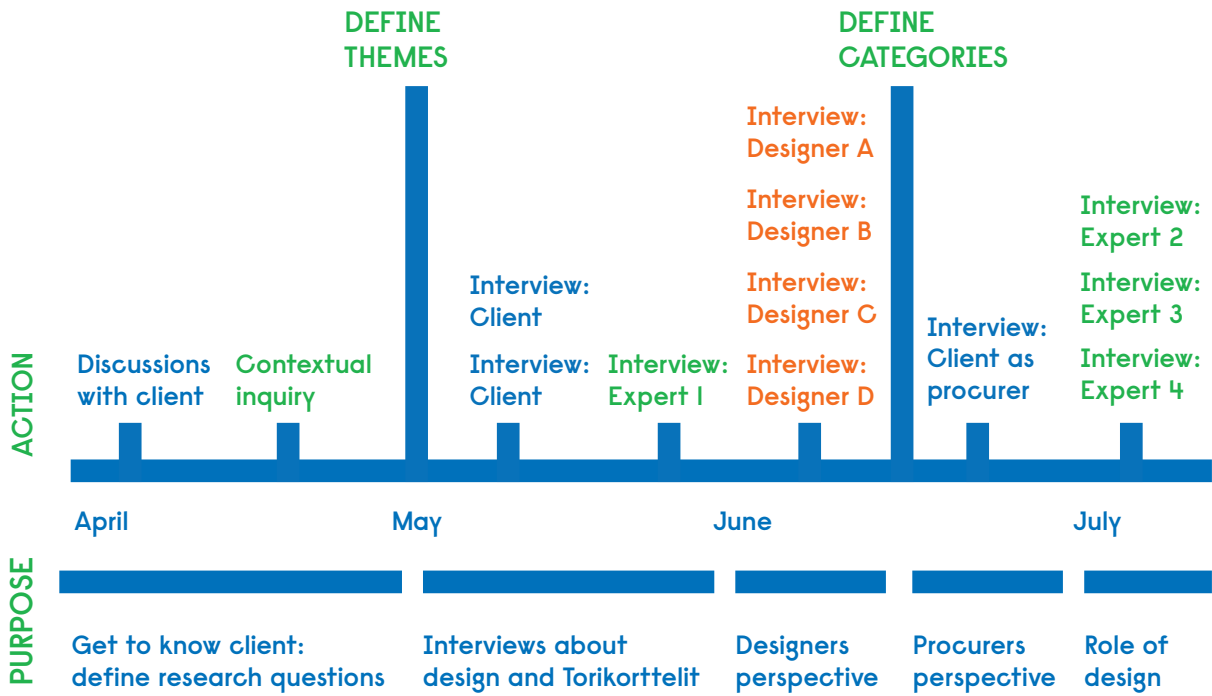
These examples of design procurements represent Helsingin Leijona Oy’s experience in procuring design. The list of projects is quite an extensive record of working with different types of design. Helsingin Leijona Oy has also been rather open-minded in testing different types of design services. The conducted projects have taught about design in practice through first hand experiences. Now after some years of revitalisation work, a reflection on design procurements thus far can reveal ideas or patterns that can be learned from.

Observation rounds in the physical area were essential in detecting the changes that had

been made. As I had become familiar with the designers’ work thus far, I visited the area with those projects in mind and placed the design initiatives into context. I tried to imagine how the area used to be before any changes were made and how the spaces have been used during different events. Another type of contextual inquiry was stepping into the shoes of a designer working in Torikorttelit. This included taking part in an ideation session as well as a walk-through of the area in order to deliver ideas for coming projects. This approach was a helpful exercise to start to build up the foundation of the designers’ perspectives.

INTERVIEWS TIMELINE

Themed interviews were the main method of inquiry in the empirical part of the thesis. Defining the most fruitful themes was important in order to build a structure for the perception comparison.



These eight themes rose from the conversations about design and Torikorttelit:

- 1. Designers relation and general attitude towards Torikorttelit
- 2. What is recognised as design in Torikorttelit
- 3. Clients’ design competency
- 4. Designers responsibility
- 5. Design definitions in relation to real estate development
- 6. The start of a project with a client
- 7. Design and city development in practice
- 8. Future opportunities for Helsingin Leijona Oy

For each interview, I drafted a different set of questions within these themes. The type of information I was seeking for within the theme depended on who I was interviewing and when. Although the interviews followed the same themes, the emphasis of the discussions changed according to the phase of the process. In the timeline below, the action (the type of information inquiry, who was interviewed etc.) and the purpose of the action are presented step by step. The timeline introduces how each phase was fundamental in order to proceed to the next phase. The timeline also shows the two instances where I made strategic decisions about focusing the inquiry: theme and category definitions. These instances were essential for filtering the information to focus the inquiry on the research questions at hand.

PERCEPTION COMPARISON AS A METHOD

In the following sections, I will present the findings from the perception comparison as a method. The findings are analysed according to each category included in the inquiry.

**Process**  
Putting to use the comparison method functioned well as a tool to carry the entire research project forward. The method helped

to focus on defining the role of design through understanding different perspectives. Michael Leitner used a similar method in his research paper Different perceptions of the design process in the context of DesignArt. Leitner describes the reason for choosing to use the method in the following manner: “We were interested to see how their different expectations, levels of access to information and roles lead to different understandings and interpretation of the process” (2013:495). This comment describes similar aspects to this thesis research as roles and expectations are highlighted as key defining factors.

After the designers had been interviewed, the specific categories according to different aspects of design projects had surfaced. Some of the categories only arose as affecting factors in a procurement from the designers’ point of view. For example, it became clear that the projects had very different beginnings which then affected the communication along the project. Other categories were based on the information I had gathered before the designer interviews. The two rounds of interviews, procurers and designers, were enough to identify these six categories as concurring and the most crucial areas related to perceptions of the different parties involved.

- Brief
- Start
- Communication
- Deliverable
- Learnings
- Potential

The workshop with the procurer revealed several illustrative examples of how the procurer had learned from different designers. This also confirmed that the procurers were constantly increasing their knowledge of design as well as their design competency while working with designers. For example, the procurer described how designer A’s way of immaculately paying attention to detail and efforts in delivering great results paved the way for Helsingin Leijona Oy increasing their standards of work methods and expected results.

Knowledge level

During the interviews, all designers described relationships with clients on a general level to paint a picture of how they approach new clients. Designers A and D stated that it is important to assess the client’s level of knowledge of design before starting a project. All designers mentioned that clients do not always know what they want, which makes assessment essential in order to understand the real problems affecting the described situations. In closer inspection, this seemed to be more about the designers believing that a greater impact could be achieved by further researching the problem and suggesting a proposal affecting the issue from an alternative angle. The procurer, on the other hand, did not conceive this type of approach similarly. The procurer understood that the questioning of the original brief was due to designers not thinking of the existing circumstances and not sticking to the presented problem.

The aforementioned observation has to do largely with the levels of understanding and competency of design. It seems as if designers and procurers do not have a protocol to present their skill levels and work methods. Instead, from the designers’ point of view, the process was described as assessing, while the procurer said that designers have an intrinsic need to reconsider existing briefs instead of diving into understanding existing circumstances.

CODING AND ANALYSING THE DATA TABLE

One part of the analysis method was to separately inquire the different parties’ views, and the second part was to evaluate the perceptions in comparison to one another. These assessments started to reveal the reasons behind common

and differing ideas as the comments were placed next to one another. The key finding was that the most successful outcomes were achieved when a mutual understanding was reached from early on. This became apparent from the analysis of how the different projects proceeded step by step and how successful the outcomes were considered to have been.

Assessing whether the views were in agreement, conflicting or when neither evaluation could be made was a gradual process as the information was gathered sequentially. For example, I had already added the designers’ views on the table before the mini-workshop with the procurer and it was important to stay objective while facilitating the workshop and not to lead the discussion even though I was already aware of the designers’ views. The procurer concentrated solely on their side of the project, which helped to place their answers directly on the table. After placing the procurer’s views on the table, I was able to make the comparison. It was important to divide the comments into each section rather than base any assessments on a hunch or an attitude I had perceived from one or the other parties. I performed the assessment and reviewed it several times to assure the comments were corresponding to the same phases and thus were legitimate comparisons.

The colour coding shows a variety of assessments. Some conclusions may be detected by looking at the colour coding, but no real patterns are apparent. Most categories need to be inspected through reviewing all of the comments. The analysis depends on the phase in question. Even though answers seem to vary largely, it was possible to recognise good practices and learning processes from project to project. Thus the sample of four different projects turned out to be sufficient. I will describe each category shortly and make comparisons within projects in the following sections.

Briefs

Michael Leitner describes the objective of their comparison method: “we wanted to understand how knowledge, process and coherence with the brief are perceived and valued by the different parties involved” (2013:495). Evidently, the importance of the brief had become emphasised in both comparison studies.

One clear lesson is to recognise that the brief is an area where mutual understanding is not a given. In this analysis, the brief signifies the process of how the designers were first engaged with the procurer. It is the basis for setting goals and understanding what is expected of the commission. When looking at the data table and its colour coding, it may be stated that the brief giving has an impact on the concurring steps.

Start

In the study “brief” solely meant the first engagement between the two parties. The “start” signifies how the first steps of a working relationship proceeded. A comparison between the projects reveals the reasoning behind the colour coding. In the project assessed as red, the designer B continued with their work in a way that suggested a rebrief of the assignment. The procurer was not aware of the rebrief of the designer until the proposal. In the yellow project the designer D described what they prefer the working method to be in order to establish a good understanding. However, this was not completely taken into consideration by the procurer which is why the perceptions are defined as neither in agreement or disagreement. The two green projects differ

	Designer A Procurer	Designer B Procurer	Designer C Procurer	Designer D Procurer
Brief	Green	Red	Yellow	Red
Start	Green	Red	Green	Yellow
Communication	Green	Green	Yellow	Red
Deliverable	Green	Red	Green	Yellow
Learning	Yellow	Yellow	Green	Red
Potential	Green	Yellow	Red	Yellow
Future	Yellow	Red	Yellow	Red

Colour coded data table representing agreeing or clashing views.

from one another demonstrating two different methods of reaching an understanding. One is thanks to an established partnership, while the other is an example of designers using design methods to consciously work towards a common understanding.

Communication



In this section, agreeing views were reached in two of the projects. In one of them communication worked smoothly, while in the other the two parties agreed that there had not been enough communication. In the conflicting comparison, the procurer and designer described the communication differently. The project assessed yellow had most aspects of communication agreed on, but there were also a few conflicting remarks.

The brief had not been described similarly by the counterparties in the projects which did not reach smooth communication. The communication was smooth only with designer A, and in that project the brief had also been understood similarly. This reveals that the understanding of the brief is a prerequisite for good communication. As noted in the previous category, however, the designer may take matters into their own hands in order to take steps towards creating an understanding during the work process.

Deliverable

The deliverable is the outcome of the first three preceding phases. It can be detected from the colour coding that if the “brief” was unclear, the “start” of the project did not help define it and “communication” was not smooth, then the “deliverable” will not be seen similarly by the two parties. This assessment does not mean the projects were unsuccessful, but it means that the designer ended up presenting proposals that did not correspond to the client’s understanding of the problem.



The project deliverables were seen similarly with designer A and C. Designer B stood behind a proposed rebrief while the procurer thought that the designer had not taken the existing conditions into consideration. With designer D, the outcome answered to one aspect of the procurement, but both parties agreed that the project might have been too ambitious.

Learning

The learning phase is a different comparison from the previous phases. Learning essentially signifies different things for the parties in different roles. For the procurer, learning often means increasing their design knowledge, which helps procuring in the future. For example, the procurer speculating whether one of the briefs was too ambitious corresponded with the designer’s view about the same project and thus would prepare the procurer better for assessing the start of the next project. The designer mentioned that it would have been fruitful to perform a larger project concerning the design problem. For the designer, the learning was often about looking back at the project and recognising what other aspects would be interesting to work on further.

Although this category does not directly compare perceptions, it was interesting to make this pairing as it revealed whether the experiences would lead towards similar paths for both parties in future projects. With the designers who were consultants, this did not arise as a clear opportunity, but when a partnership was in question, both parties described the need to refresh visions in order to keep the work dynamic and enthusiastic. Partnership was seen as a good way to work efficiently, as long as it is fostered by both sides.

Potential

In the “potential” category, the parties were asked to speculate whether they considered there to be more potential in working with the task they had been working on. Here the purpose of the comparison was to assess whether the procurer and the designer would take similar steps in future projects to fulfil the potential they had discovered. This means both working together again and starting new projects and finding the potential to make an impact faster.

The designers and procurers made many insightful comments about procuring design projects. Both perspectives elaborated how they saw the role of design being able to grow its influence. The procurers saw there being more potential specifically for designers to work in the public sector. They considered there to be room for improvement for designers in becoming more aware of the plausible ways of making an impact in the public sector. In their view, designers ought to gain more knowledge on existing circumstances before suggesting changes. Designers’ comments on the role of the procurer discussed how the design knowledge of the procurer is essential for working on fruitful problems.

The procurer mentioned that in their view designers have a need to work from a clean slate. This was seen as a complicating factor by the client. They said it had been difficult to work with some projects as the deliverables did not take into consideration all the reasoning behind the work already done in Torikorttelit. This perception did not resonate with the designers’ views. The designers were, in fact, keen to find out opportunities to deliver outcomes by finding the stakeholders with the power to take ideas forward. This shows that there is the same frustration experienced by both parties but its understood differently.

Interestingly, the discussion with Designer B, C, and D over potential also included comments about how designers sell design projects. The designers seemed to approach finishing design

projects in a way where they open up the ideas so that new projects could be initiated. This was not touched on by the procurers. As procuring is largely about a company buying services, it was quite interesting that the procurer did not mention the commercial aspects.

Future

The questions in this category concentrated on how design can make an input in real estate development and also how these designers and procurers would see each other working together in the future. Thus the aim was twofold: to find out about the bigger picture and also about the specific dynamics between the pairings.



Similarly to the analysis of the comments about potential, there were many interesting ideas and suggestions in the “Future” category. As can be seen from the colour coding, however, the projects had not sparked a consensus between any pairing. This area requires further analysis in order to reveal the suggestions which are further analysed in chapter 6. As a comparison, it is enough to state that future steps were in most cases regarded differently by the two parties.

CATEGORY ANALYSIS AND SORTING

The comparison exercise revealed the agreements and conflicts in different phases in each project. Some instances have clear reasoning behind the differing views while other instances seem to be much more ambiguous. The analysis of each phase pointed out conclusions and ideas for some changes that could be made. With the research aim in mind, it would not be worthwhile to give suggestions for each phase. This would give a too short-sighted list of ideas which might be hard to implement in its entirety. Instead, the phases and the types of answers may be sorted into categories by combining phases together. These combinations are then the areas where impact may be made.

I recognised some areas of opportunity after having analysed all of the comparison pairings. For example, with designer C the brief giving was a fast process, but the proceeding steps (the start of the project and communication) helped the deliverable mould into a successful project. This showcases the importance of systematical-ly looking at which steps enable other areas to flourish. Thus far, the comparison has been done by just comparing the views, but here the ideas and successfulness of the outcomes was touched upon. The opportunity area clustering was the first step towards making suggestions for how design could make an impact in real estate de-velopment.

The three main areas of opportunity were:

**Opportunity area 1:**

Categories 1,2,3 & 4:  
Brief, Start, Communciation, Deliverable  
Questions about the brief, the start of work, communication and deliverable all revolved around the definition or the lack of definition for the scope of the project.  
Opportunity = Scope definition

**Opportunity area 2:**

Category 5: Learning  
The procurer saw that there was potential to achieve more with designers. Designers also saw that there was potential for further work in de-veloping the project.  
Opportunity = Systematic learning process and continued design use

**Opportunity area 3:**

Category 6 & 7: Potential, Future  
Future steps should take note of all the learnings from the work with designers thus far. The or-ganisation could benefit from seeing themselves as an experienced design procurer.  
Opportunity = Increasing design competency

These three clusters may be used for the purpose of filtering the information and delivering the most useful suggestions.

**AFFINITY DIAGRAM ANALYSIS**

The main purpose of the affinity diagram was to reveal more in-depth information and sugges-tions to solving problems with perceptual issues. I used the affinity diagram to handle the data and to create statements, which I then placed in the areas of opportunity. The statements from the diagram dig in deeper to the second research question: how can design make an impact in real estate development.

The clustering of ideas in the affinity diagram required an intuitive way of working. The clusters started to form after enough views of different interviewees were taken into con-sideration by pinning ideas written on sticky notes on the wall. The ideas started to connect and formulate into themes in which more and more comments were reinforcing each other. I realised I had been making clusters to themes regarding the organisation where some ideas about design were the main point, but which were not related to the role of design. I then started to divide the sticky notes so that I could build another diagram more concentrated on the role of design itself. For the second diagram, I reused the sticky notes that were first used to describe design in the organisation.

I went through all the sticky notes in each cluster and created sentences to describe the information. These sentences formulated into statements that could be used for the research. The list of statements ended being extensive, as it was an unfiltered exercise. What became evident was that the role of design is strongly rooted in the public sector work with comments from all interviewees describing its role in many different ways. In contrast, the role of design in real estate development had not been pinned down, but instead the interviewees described the potential in varying ways.

Statements from the diagram were sorted into the following thematic groups:

- City development
- Real estate development
- Design in Helsinki
- People level and relationships
- Definitions of roles
- Design potential
- Design capacity
- Role of consultancies
- Briefs
- The client as a real estate developer
- Codesign
- Service design
- Speculation of future

There are relevant and irrelevant statements within these thematic groups regarding the scope of this thesis. The next step after making and sorting the statements was to filter through them in order to see what statements were con-nected to the posed research questions. The more descriptive presentation of statements will be included in the following chapters.

**SYNTHESIS**

The filtered statements became a list of ideas about how design could enter real estate development. The extensive list itself does not deliver suggestions or conclusions, but it needed formatting. In order to make use of these ideas, I sorted them accordingly in the three opportunity areas defined previously in the section “Category analysis and sorting”. This way I could format the information in a concise way. The many rounds of filtering information helped to focus on the right type of proposals and stay within the right scope.

The synthesis of the affinity diagram statements and the opportunity areas functions as the structure for chapter 6. Each opportunity area is presented in detail with the findings and fur-ther suggestions related to the topics. Finally, in chapter 7, I connect the findings from this the-sis to the wider aim of the project by presenting how the separate report written to Helsingin Leijona Oy was used to deliver the conclusions.





# FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND OPPORTUNITIES

---

## 6.

---

### REFLECTIONS ON CHOOSING THE PERCEPTION COMPARISON METHOD

Design has a lot to offer from creating functional objects to solving problems in new ways. Designers with their capabilities work with different professions which all have their preferences and working styles (Michlewski, 2008). Designers constantly venture into new disciplines and analyse the different variables with the different clients. This constant learning process keeps the field dynamic and designers on their toes. Being on one's toes constantly is not an easy task.

Interviewing both counterparties highlighted the differences in their roles. The process enabled the constructing of separate understandings towards similar themes. The gathering of information was especially rewarding thanks to the structure of the research being clear throughout the process. As the information gathering yielded a huge amount of data, the structured exercise helped to focus on the findings that could be found through comparing the different views.

Both parties described stereotypes to a certain degree when discussing the stakeholder on the paired role. To some extent, these stereotypes seemed to prevent both the designers and the procurers from being empathic and putting themselves in each other's position. The procurer also had a secondary agenda for designers to deliver an outsider's perspective in describing and summarising the work they do. At times this summarising seemed more useful for the procurer than reaching for design deliverables. For designers, this role was difficult to understand as it was not a task that had been described.

As presented in the methodology and analysis of empirical data, the focusing on categories and sorting answers into themes was the key to focusing the study. In the following parts of this chapter, I will go through each area of opportunity and describe the findings. I will

attempt to connect the learnings back to the literature to support and tie the study to recent discussion in design theory. I will also include the insights from the interviews in the format of suggestions. Until this point, the study has been more about simply collecting information. This last section will also bring up suggestions which are based on the conclusions made.

The literature review functioned as a way to build the background to understandings of design, but not for delivering suggestions or describing best practices. The connection to design literature in this part will be a more detailed account of design methods instead of speaking of larger topics. In order to argue the suggestions, I will attempt to connect them with other designers working with similar examples. The literature on brief giving and design in public sector work is especially important.

The three sections of this chapter focus on the areas where the most potential for making an impact was detected. Firstly, I will describe the findings from the perception comparison in each section. The first area of opportunity, “scope”, is much more specific and concentrates on the different phases of the projects. The last two

areas, “potential” and “future”, are more abstract and concentrate more on the second research question, the role of design. Each description is followed by an analysis of how projects could deliver better results by making changes in those areas.

OPPORTUNITY AREA I:  
FOSTERING CREATIVITY  
WITHIN A SCOPE

Creative work and design projects do not often follow set models. Solutions are ad hoc and suitable for specific situations. Often the case is that design projects start to branch out and spread when more issues are discovered. Navigating through the different issues is no easy task and designers work may seem sporadic to the client. Research conducted by using design methods often reveals issues that deal with the given problem from different angles. For example, a separate problem would need to be solved as a prerequisite to offering solutions to the problem posed by a procurer. This is natural, since design methods often investigate a broad field before defining and developing a solution.

Designers’ way of working is often described with the double diamond model (UK Design Council, 2015). The model is a popular way to present how design projects proceed from a problem to a solution. The model highlights how a design brief is not pinned down until the middle phase. If this model is the way designers work, or find it most successful to work, it should also be noted by the procurer giving the brief to the designers.

Out of the four projects A, B, C and D, all designers started with a problem defined by the procurer. All of the designers followed the double diamond model in the different phases of the work. The first phase, discovering “insights to the problem”, was done with the client in three of the cases. The definition phase was only done in cooperation with the procurer in one project. In three projects, designers suggested rebriefs, out of which one was successful and embraced by the procurer. As a framework for the procurer, I would see it beneficial to concentrate on making sure this definition phase which leads to a brief or a rebrief would be done in cooperation with the designers. Proof of this can be detected from the projects in the comparison data table where the one project with close cooperation after the discovery phase was assessed as smooth and successful.

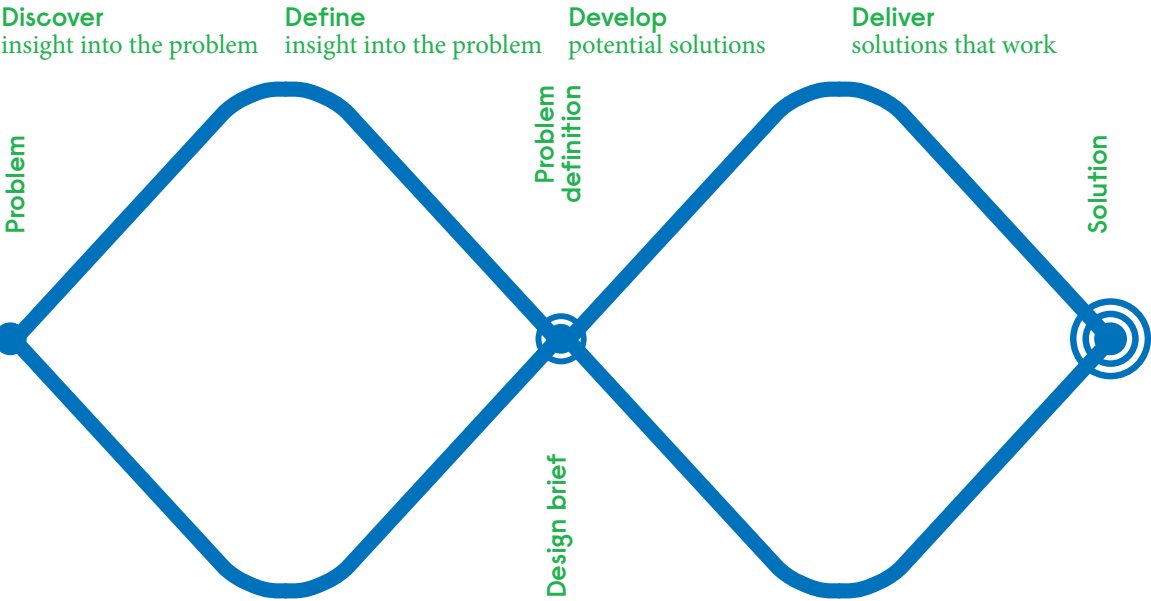
The double diamond model enables ideation and frees space for designers to explore solutions while staying within the right scope. The procurer has mentioned that the best things happen when you keep an open mind and let the project evolve naturally. The procurer also prefers not to limit creativity and appreciates the way design embraces ambiguity. These are characteristics of design that will not be limited by briefs if the brief is done according to the best practices in design briefing. Instead of open briefs, the procurer should consider a brief as a space of discovery (Blyth, 2011). Blyth describes the concept of an opportunity space in a brief as a way to answer to a challenge by offering “background to put (the problem) into context, and key dimensions that dive into a handful of relevant facets of the challenge” (2011:97). The opportunity space defines a

scope for a project that must be defined in order to deliver successful and desired outcomes. This is achieved by helping to define the most fruitful solutions by offering the background to place a solution in context and by presenting the key dimensions that present the helpful approaches towards a solution (Blyth, 2011).

A brief should not be persuasive, but instead take a position to bring focus to the challenge (Boyer, 2011). This description presents briefs as more like open and accessible documents which do not restrict the designers. In fact, Boyer states that the document should invite the designer to question the text as a fruitful basis for discussion. This also resonates with the clients’ idea of open-ended formulating of project outcomes.

In the literature review, I presented the idea that a design brief is a tool for communication (Lawson, 2006) and that it should be worked on together with the different parties involved in the project (Blyth, 2001). The start of a project should be seen as a process where the designer and procurer learn about each other and define a common scope for the project at hand. The analysis of the different perceptions and the way the design projects unfolded reinforces this idea of fully engaging in the brief as a way of defining the project and its outcomes. After a brief has been worked on it should “frame an opportunity, and describe the current reality of the challenge” (Boyer, 2011).

The opportunity area one is the most straight forward of the three as it concentrates on the specific phases of procuring. The key findings in this area are that when procurers and designers work on a brief as a common process, better understanding and more suitable outcomes will be delivered. As a prerequisite for establishing and writing these types of briefs, it should be noted that experience and design knowledge will function as an enabling factor. The problem definition phase may be led by either one of the parties. For example the designers may initiate interviews or workshop sessions or ask for validation of observations. The client on their behalf may take in consideration the problem definition steps when making the initial work plan.



Double diamond adapted from The Design Process: What is the Double Diamond? (UK Design Council, 2015)

## OPPORTUNITY AREA 2: POTENTIAL = SYSTEMATIC LEARNING PROCESSES

As a procurer, Helsingin Leijona Oy is experienced in working with design and designers and has been increasing their design knowledge in the past five years. The experience and learning process has not been curated, but instead it has been organic or happening by chance. This research and the questions asked revealed a progression in the procurements, but there were also instances where unsatisfactory methods were repeated. There were also topics that arose with new designers that had already been worked or commented on by other designers.

Linking statements from the affinity diagram to the perception analysis reveals these inconsistencies. Many of the conflicting views and some of the critique posed by the designers had already been raised to the table and worked on by the procurer. For example, it was pointed out that the narrative of Torikorttelit is unclear and the vision for the area did not become apparent to the designers. As a matter of fact, in an earlier project with different designers these very topics had been discussed and the conclusions were formulated into statements to lead the work and communications of Helsingin Leijona Oy. These statements and synthesis were considered helpful to the organisation and they have been adapted to the company's presentation materials, but not as driving forces.

This is naturally a sticky matter. It does show that the procurer has raised the correct issues to find solutions to, but the solutions are not easily available. In a later interview, the procurer stated that consultants should do more research on existing conditions and previously tested ideas before they come and start giving suggestions. Often the procurer has already gone through the ideas and knows the restrictions. It could be useful for Helsingin Leijona Oy to explore ways to present the lessons learned to get projects towards the correct level of discovery and implications fast and efficiently.

Designers struggle with similar matters. Designers emphasise the important task of finding ways to deliver and implement proposals. It has been suggested that it is important for designers to find "gatekeepers" (Design for Government, 2016) and "driving forces" (Design for Services, 2017) within organisations to take the projects further. In the interviews, the designers mentioned several times that it is important to get to know the organisation they are working with and find out who to go to when issues arise. Designer involvement in overseeing projects has also been stressed as a potentially fruitful solution (Kimbell, 2009). These ideas and the previous remarks from the procurer highlight different perceptions that should be brought closer together. The brief could once again be a helpful tool for creating an understanding.

Concerning the projects with Designers B and C, the procurer said that unexpected issues arose which prevented them from implementing the proposals although they found the suggestions interesting. There was further discussion on how to implement the ideas, but in the end, these ideas were left aside. It seems as if this was not due to the procurer not seeing their importance but due to some unforeseen circumstances and time restrictions. The expectations and resources of the client should correlate with the outcome of the project and should be assessed in the briefing. Fulfilling expectations does not only mean the client being pleased with the designers' suggestions, but also proposals being in the right scale for the client to implement.

A systematic learning process as an opportunity to improve working cultures was touched on in interviews with both parties. This could be done by strategically updating and refreshing visions within the company and with partners. Many systematic structures are already used by Helsingin Leijona Oy such as a yearly calendar which visually represents the work done. In the yearly work, there are also annual goal definitions in the beginning of the year as well as development discussions in the fall. These have been successful in leading work and team effort forward, however, the team members did

mentioned that they wished that the strategy definitions had been done more often and that there are "as many strategies in the company as there are workers".

**"No one speaks of revitalisation anymore. There's mostly just discussion about bringing more life to the area"**  
City communications officer

The report done on the ten-year revitalisation project leads the work of Helsingin Leijona Oy towards updating and expanding their strategy, which they refer to in discussions as phase 2. They see this strategy work as a defining step after the first ten years of revitalisation. The next challenge is regarded to be how to not only speak about revitalisation, but also see the project as a wider tool for strengthening the city centre of Helsinki and bringing life to the entire city. This brings us to the final opportunity area dealing with taking on board what we have learned thus far.

## OPPORTUNITY AREA 3: DESIGN COMPETENCY AND DESIGNER POTENTIAL IN REAL ESTATE DEVELOPMENT

**"Everyone designs who devises courses of action aimed at changing existing situations into preferred ones."**  
Herbert Simon (1996)

Helsingin Leijona Oy has been working on the vision of creating a place for citizens and tourists alike in Torikorttelit. They have been consciously working towards steering the "New Old Town" away from the risk of the historical area becoming a museum. I see these as examples of Herbert's description of what it means to design. Continuing from this notion, it is an evident and an interesting opportunity for Helsingin Leijona Oy to venture into defining what the role of design can be in real estate development. The

fact that the organisation has increased design competency has shown good direction and continuing to do so ought to increase the benefit of design even more.

The organisation has stated that the Design Driven City and city designers were a great idea and a way to learn how designers can work in the public sector. The organisation, however, finds that the full potential has not been reached yet. They believe that designers in the city context ought to learn to work and make things possible in the public sector circumstances. The organisation also thinks that there should be a way to suggest different options when proposing design solutions. In case some things turn out not to be plausible, they would find it useful to have an alternative plan of action ready. This is the type of work that Helsingin Leijona Oy themselves have learned to implement in their work as a moderator between stakeholders.

Designers consider their place and role in public sector work differently from the way Helsingin Leijona Oy sees it. Designers working in the public sector thus far have found it beneficial to change the way processes are implemented and to bring in new type of thinking (Demos Helsinki, 2015). Designers also consider their role as acting as facilitators of communication in order to break siloes between offices. For example the one year residency program of designers working in ministries through the Design Exchange was foremostly described as such facilitation (Helsinki Design Lab, 2013). Design is finding its place in the public sector as designers share their experiences and learnings. Another example of this type of design promoting is the Aalto University course: "Design for Government". As more and more designers start to find their approach, the role will become better defined for designers to communicate as well.

Design in the public sector is different whether it is governmental or municipal work. In this case study, it is essential to describe the specific situation of working in the municipal sector.

Cities as areas of influence may implement proposals faster than governmental decision-making. Thus the municipal sector is more fruitful for finding new solutions (Laakso-Liukkonen, 2017). This is especially important to consider when thinking of solutions to challenges faced on the scale of wicked problems. Sustainability challenges may be more effectively influenced through this sector. This connects the role of design to finding sustainable ways of living. Sustainable real estate development is an opportunity to include design in solving problems and thinking of far-reaching implications. Design has potential to make a positive impact on the cities we live in by creating visions (strategic design), listening to users (user-centred design) and managing change (transformation design).

An employee of Helsingin Leijona Oy described the future opportunities of steering change and leading development projects in the city sector by referring to Anne Stenroos, the Chief Design Officer of Helsinki City nominated in 2016. A comment by Stenroos, which the team member considered especially promising, was presented in a city branding seminar and made Helsinki

stand out for having innovative opportunities for leading its future. The Helsingin Leijona Oy team member described Stenroos' comment in the following way:

“While the others were basically speaking of ad campaigns, Anne spoke of what the world and the city would be in 30 years. We should be building the city for the people who are in the centre of activities 30 years ahead. We should listen to people like her in the beginning of a project: we should envision and imagine what the city will be like and only then begin the development projects”.

The Chief Design Officer has lots of work ahead of her, but the nomination signifies that the influence of design is rising in the municipal sector. It is implied that design will have a strong foothold in how city development will be managed.





# DISCUSSION

---

## 7.

---

### REPORT FOR HELSINGIN LEIJONA

The report the three students compiled for Helsingin Leijona Oy finished with a chapter called “Future of Torikorttelit”. In this chapter, each of the three students had an opportunity to communicate the findings from their respective theses and research results. The report was a way to introduce new ideas, results and theoretical proof to the client as well as the larger audience of the report. This larger audience consists of the stakeholder network of Helsingin Leijona Oy, many of whom are civil servants of the City of Helsinki.

In the report, my chapter based on the findings of this research was written in an approachable manner with more description of different design fields. Some of these design fields were not relevant to this thesis while they were key approaches to be introduced to the client.

In the report, I included a summary of what is meant by design competency and design knowledge. I wanted to highlight the two different ways design may increase its influence in organisations. The first way is increasing knowledge, which will improve the professional aspect of procuring and collaboration with designers. The second way is to improve design competence which is also needed in order for the organisation to practice design through design thinking and also through taking design methods in use. The team members have mentioned that design methods have proved efficient and that design has been helpful in facilitating processes.

### DESCRIPTIONS OF DESIGN FIELDS

In expert interviews the work done in Torikorttelit was described as “user-inspired revitalisation”. In my opinion, this observation is the starting point to establishing the concept of design-driven real estate development. An agreement on the definition of what “user-inspired” means seems to be lacking within the organisation and some people in Helsingin Leijona Oy even consider it to be just a buzzword. In order for the company to benefit from design in their work, user-inspired revitalisation should be commonly agreed on

and manifested as a work method. In the report I included a description of the field according to design theory and suggested what aspects might be useful for the company to study further. For example the chapter described different approaches of codesign (INUSE Research group, 2015) in order to elucidate what practices had been used previously and what could be useful to learn more about.

Codesign and participatory methods were separately highlighted in the report as they are especially relevant for the work of the company. In the description, the emphasis on careful consideration of methods, aims and consequences was highlighted. For example, it was brought up that in the interviews the designers had stressed the importance of codesign activities having a clear and meaningful purpose and that the results must be communicated to the participants. The aim was partly to introduce the field of codesign in order to highlight the consideration of what may be facilitated by the organisation themselves and when exterior codesign professionals ought to be brought into projects.

The closing statement of the report shared elements with the last opportunity area discussed in this thesis: “designer potential in real estate development”. The strong proof of design’s firm status in Helsinki City with the nomination of a Chief Design Officer speaks for itself in justifying design’s importance in Finland. The future will show how the role of the Chief Design Officer and Helsinki City Lab will take root in the city. The impact wished for will affect how the city grows and forms in the future. In real estate development, this will have to be taken into consideration as the city is its playfield. The opportunity is interesting, bearing in mind the future challenges faced with complex wicked problems considering sustainability issues. Whether design will manage to make a profound impact and help solving these problems will remain to be seen.

# REFERENCES

---

## Articles and books:

Amatullo, M. (2015). Design Attitude and Social Innovation: Empirical Studies of the Return on Design. Doctoral dissertation. Cleveland: Case Western Reserve University.

Anholt, S. (2009). Places. UK: Palgrave Macmillan.

Bertola, P. & Teixeira, J. (2003). Design as a knowledge agent. Design Studies, 24(2), pp.181-194.

Blyth, A., & Worthington, J. (2001). Managing the brief for better design. London: Spon Press.

Binder, T., De Michelis, G., Ehn, P., Jacucci, G., Linde, P., & Wagner, I. (2011). Design things: The MIT Press.

Boyer, B., Cook, J. W. & Steinberg, M. (2011). In Studio: Recipes for Systemic Change. Helsinki: Sitra.

Buchanan, R. (1992). Wicked Problems in Design Thinking. Design Issues, 8(2), pp.5.

Buchanan, R. (2001). Design Research and the New Learning. Design Issues, 17(4), pp.3-23.

Caradonna, J.L. (2014). Sustainability: A history. Oxford University Press.

Dorst, K. (2015). Frame Innovation: Create New Thinking by Design. Cambridge: MIT Press.

Eisenhardt, K. & Graebner, M. (2007). Theory Building From Cases: Opportunities And Challenges. Academy of Management Journal, 50(1), pp.25-32.

Frey, P., Dunn, L. & Cochran, R. (2011). The Greenest Building: Quantifying the Environmental Value of Building Reuse. National Trust for Historic Preservation.

Hernberg, H. (2017). Architect/Designer As ‘urban Agent’: A Case Of Mediating Temporary Use In Cities. Nordes 2017: DESIGN+POWER.



Erjavec, M., Isotalo, V., Menestrina, J. & Perflyeva, E. (2016). In good Company: Motivating strategic upkeep in housing companies. Aalto University, Department of design.

Ilonen, P. (2004). Kaleidoskooppi, Lasipalatsin restauroinnin suunnittelu- ja toteutusprosessin koko kuva. Suunnittelupohjainen lisensiaatintyö. Teknillinen korkeakoulu, arkkitehtiosasto.

Isokuortti, J. (2017). Forces of change and their possible influences on the retail property market in the Helsinki metropolitan area - case in Helsinki city centre. Unpublished master's thesis. Aalto University, Department of Real estate.

Jacobs, J. (1993) Life and Death of Great American Cities. United States: Modern Library, Originally published in 1961.

Johansson-Sköldberg, U., Woodilla, J. and Çetinkaya, M. (2013). Design Thinking: Past, Present and Possible Futures. Creativity and Innovation Management, 22(2), pp.121-146.

Kimbell, L. (2009a). Design practices in design thinking. European Academy of Management.

Kimbell, L. (2009b). Insights From Service Design Practice. 8th European Academy Of Design Conference.

Lawson, B. (2006). How Designers Think: The Design Process Demystified (4th ed.). Oxford: Elsevier.

Leitner, M., Innella, G. & Yauner, F. (2013). Different perceptions of the design process in the context of DesignArt. Design Studies 34(4), July 2013, pp. 494-513.

Lucero, A. (2015). Using Affinity Diagrams to Evaluate Interactive Prototypes. Human-Computer Interaction – INTERACT, 2015, pp. 231-248.

Malmberg, L. (2017). Building Design Capability in the Public Sector: Expanding the Horizons of Development. Linköping University Electronic Press.

Manzini, E. ( 2011). 'Introduction'. In Meroni, A. & Sangiorgi, D. Design for Services. Aldershot, UK: Gower Publishing, pp. 1-6.

Manzini, E. (2016). Design Culture and Dialogic Design. Design Issues, 32(1), pp.52-59.

Michlewski, K. (2008). Uncovering Design Attitude: Inside the Culture of Designers. Organization Studies, 29(3), pp. 373-392.

Nusem, E., Wrigley, C. and Matthews, J. (2017). Developing Design Capability in Nonprofit Organizations. Design Issues, 33(1), pp.61-75.

O'Gorman, J. (1998). ABC of Architecture. University of Pennsylvania Press.

Phillips, P. (2012). Creating the perfect design brief. New York: Allworth Press.

Ramlau, U. (2004). In Denmark, Design Tops the Agenda. Design Management Review, 15(4), pp.48-54.

Reason, B. (2013). The service design promise. Touchpoint, 50(1), pp.14-17.

Rodgers P. & Anusas, M. (2008). Ethnography And Design. International Conference On Engineering And Product Design Education.

Ryd, N. and Fristedt, S. (2007). Transforming strategic briefing into project briefs. Facilities, 25(5/6), pp.185-202.

Stickdorn, M., Schneider, J. and Andrews, K. (2011). This is service design thinking. Amsterdam: BIS Publishers.

Verganti, R. (2014). Design-driven innovation. Boston, Mass.: Harvard Business Press.

Vuorio, E. V. (2017) Efficient ways for cities to conduct industrial policy and urban planning related to urban space and urban regeneration - Case Torikorttelit. Unpublished master's thesis. Aalto University, Department of Real estate

### Reports:

Jäkkö, E. (2012). World Design Capital Helsinki 2012 — Summary of the final report. World Design Organisation.

Toimiva Kaupunki. (2016). Toimiva kaupunki -hankkeen loppuraportti. World Design Organisation.

Kaupunginkanslia. (2017). Helsingin kaupungin johtamisjärjestelmän uudistuksen päälinjat. Uudistuksen perusinfo. Helsinki: Helsingin kaupunki, pp. 7-8.

Helsingin kaupunkisuunnitteluvirasto. (2013). Kaupunkikaava - Helsingin uusi yleiskaava. Visio 2050. Helsinki: Helsingin Kaupunki, pp. 7-12.

### Client material:

Helsingin Leijona Oy, Kokoro & Moi & Moilanen, A. (2012). Making Torikorttelit a Place (to be). Helsingin Leijona Oy

### Online references:

Brink, P. (2016). Palvelumuotoilu Nyt! [online] Available at: <https://www.ekonomilehti.fi/palvelumuotoilu-nyt/> [Accessed 12 Aug. 2017].

Bulsuk, K. (2009). An Introduction to 5-why. [online] Available at: <http://www.bulsuk.com/2009/03/5-why-finding-root-causes.html>. [Accessed 12 Aug. 2017].

Collaborative Industrial Design. (2017). Designing for Services 2017. [online] Available at: <http://coid.aalto.fi/designing-for-services-2017/> [Accessed 12 Aug. 2017].

Danish Design Center. (n. d.) About the Danish Design Center. [online] Available at: <http://danskdesigncenter.dk/en/about-danish-design-centre>. [Accessed 12 Aug. 2017].

Design Driven City. (2016). Design Driven City - Our Services. [online] Available at: <http://www.toimivakaupunki.fi/> [Accessed 27 July 2017].

Europe, S.E. (2013). Design for public good. Available at: <http://www.designcouncil.org.uk/resources/report/design-public-good> [Accessed 12 Aug. 2017].

Golsby-Smith, T. (2015). The New Horizons of Design . Available at: <https://medium.com/@TonyGolsbySmith/the-new-horizons-of-design-2adbf26838fc> [Accessed 20 Sept. 2017].

Helsinki Design Lab. (2013). HDL Blog - Helsinki Design Lab. [online] Available at: <http://www.helsinkidesignlab.org/> [Accessed 12 Aug. 2017].

Helsingin Kaupunki. (2017). Tytäryhteisöt. [online] Available at: <https://www.hel.fi/helsinki/fi/kaupunki-ja-hallinto/hallinto/organisaatio/helsingin-kaupunkikonserni/yhteisot/> [Accessed 10 Aug. 2017].

Hupponen, P. (2017). Kuudes mukana uudistamassa julkista sektoria. [online] Available at: <https://kuudes.com/kuudes-mukana-uudistamassa-julkista-sektoria/>. [Accessed 12 Sept. 2017].

Torikorttelit. (2017). New Old Town. [online] Available at: <http://www.torikorttelit.fi/> [Accessed 11 July. 2017].

Torikorttelit. (2013). Tervetuloa Torikortteleihin. [online] Available at: <http://www.torikorttelit.fi/fi/post/tervetuloa-torikortteleihin/> [Accessed 11 July. 2017].

UK Design Council. (n.d.). About us. [online] Available at: <http://www.designcouncil.org.uk/about-us> [Accessed 12 Aug. 2017].

UK Design Council. (2015). The Design Process: What is the Double Diamond?. [online] Available at: <http://www.designcouncil.org.uk/news-opinion/design-process-what-double-diamond>. [Accessed 27 Aug. 2017].

Design for Government. (2017). About Design For Government.. [online] Available at: <http://dfg-course.aalto.fi/> [Accessed 1 Sep. 2017].

World Design Organisation. (n.d.). WDC Helsinki 2012. [online] Available at: <http://wdo.org/programmes/wdc/past-cities/wdchelsinki2012/> [Accessed 14 Aug. 2017].

INUSE Research group. (2015). Approaches overview. [online] Available at: <http://codesign.inuse.fi/approaches> [Accessed 14 July. 2017].

### Lectures:

Mattelmäki, T. (2017). Designing for Services: co-creation co-design. January 2017. Aalto University, Department of Design.

Mazé, R. (2016). Design For Government. Empathy Block. February 2016. Aalto University, Department of Design.

Jalas, M. (2017) Nodus talks: Caring for the im/material. May 18th.

### Credits:

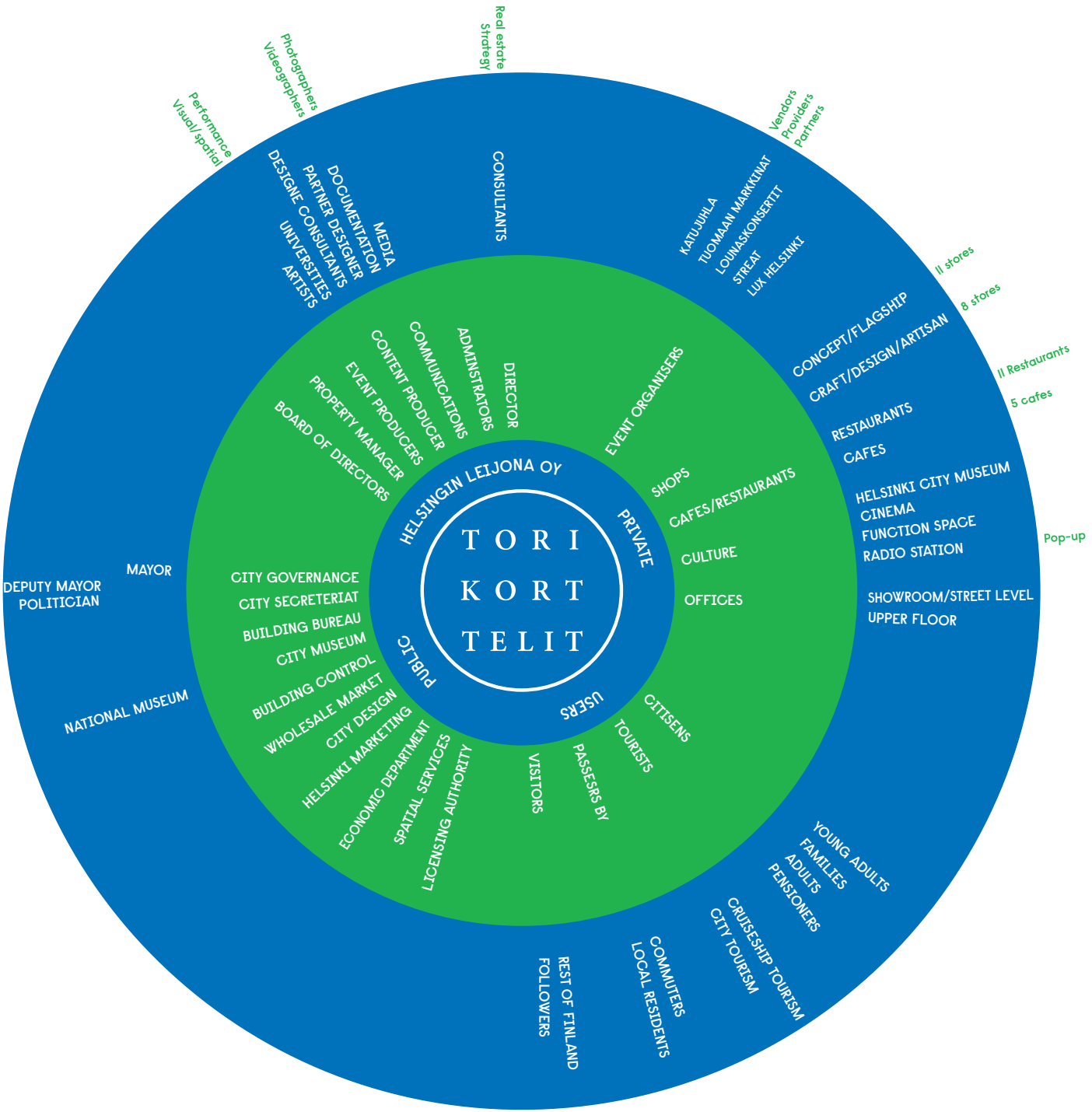
Torikorttelit visual identity created for Helsingin Leijona Oy by Kokoro & Moi (2012).

Diagrams without captions by Jutta Menestrina (2017).

Photos from the database of Helsingin Leijona Oy.

# APPENDIX I

## STAKEHOLDER MAPPING





# APPENDIX 2

## EXAMPLE INTERVIEW PROTOCOL BASED ON THE DEFINED THEMES

1. Can you please tell me a memory of Torikorttelit or anything you find especially impactful along the years?
2. What is your role in relation to Torikorttelit?
3. How would you describe your services as a design company / What type of design do you practice?
  - a. How do you communicate the type of design that you offer?
  - b. Is it ever difficult to communicate?
4. Can you please compare Helsingin Leijona Oy to your other customers?
5. How do procurements / work projects usually proceed?
  - a. Who contacts who?
  - b. How do you learn about the design problem at hand?
6. What type of briefs are common with clients and what kind of briefs would be the best?
  - a. Do you end up presenting rebriefs often?
  - b. Is it an effective tool?
  - c. What type of experiences do you have with rebriefs?
7. What does it mean to be in partnership compared to being a design consultant?
  - a. Is one or the other preferred?
8. Do you see that designers have a responsibility in representing their field?
9. What do you see has been the role of design in Torikorttelit thus far/ What do you count as design?
10. How could design make an impact in real estate development?
11. What should be taken in consideration if a similar project compared to Torikorttelit would be initiated now?

# APPENDIX 3

## AN EXAMPLE DESIGN BRIEF FOR THE USE OF HELSINGIN LEIJONA

# DESIGN BRIEF

Helsingin Leijona Oy is keen to work with you on this project. Let's define a few things first and start working! This form is best filled together.

## Project info

Date:	HELSINGIN LEIJONA (HL)	SPECIFIC GOALS:
Project name:	HL	HL:
PROJECT SUMMARY:	HL	
CURRENT SITUATION:	HL	D:
<input type="checkbox"/> continued as an appendix		
WHAT HAS BEEN DONE/TRIED BEFORE:	HL	DELIVERABLE: HL
		Set format: <input type="checkbox"/> _____
		Open format: <input type="checkbox"/> _____
<input type="checkbox"/> continued as an appendix		PROJECT UPDATES HL+D:
SPECIFIED SCOPE:	DESIGNER (D) WITH HL	How often? HL+D
<input type="checkbox"/> continued as an appendix		To Who? HL
DESIGNER, HOW WOULD YOU LIKE TO START THE PROJECT AND WHEN CAN IT BE ORGANIZED (HL+D)		IMPORTANT DATES: HL & D
		Deadline (when+reason)
Brief: <input type="checkbox"/> _____	Observation: <input type="checkbox"/> _____	Strict <input type="checkbox"/> _____
Interview: <input type="checkbox"/> _____	Discussion: <input type="checkbox"/> _____	Flexible: <input type="checkbox"/> _____
Workshop: <input type="checkbox"/> _____	Other: <input type="checkbox"/> _____	Mid review: <input type="checkbox"/> _____

